

THE THEOLOGICAL IMAGINATION

A STUDY OF MARTIN BUBER

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Chapter One

Form and Content.

A dream:

I am bicycling through an unknown woods with a map in one hand by which I am tracing my way. I am riding rapidly and buoyantly as I follow my map. There is a delightful certainty about it. Suddenly a gust of wind comes up and blows the map out of my hand. I have to get down from my bike and walk back to where the map has fallen to the ground. When I get there I find not the map but a gnarled peasant figure, a wise old man, who hands me in place of the map a living clump of grass.

How do we learn from another's theologizing and what is it that we learn? Or, to ask the same question in another way: How do we read theology, or write it?

In this study of Martin Buber we shall attempt to follow the development in his writing toward a theology of the word in the hope of showing what this implies about the character of theology itself and how it leads forward into a conception of theology which would extend beyond Buber's own achievement.

As we turn to Buber's writing we are given warning of the danger of approaching him with a thesis to test: "He who expects of me a teaching other than a pointing out.....will always be disillusioned."¹ To approach Buber for the sake of a theological "orientation" which might prove "useful"² is to be caught by the delusion that theology is theses and propositions, that it is conclusions to be questioned and made use of rather than encounters to be "consented to and loved."³

We soon discover that theologizing, at least Buber's rejects some kinds of reading and encourages others. It is always easier to use another's work as if it were

so many yard-lengths of solid and consistent material.....(to state) some point in general, then set forth a list of examples from the stories.....(to attach) to the quotes the titles of the story in parenthesis and..... keep the scholarship straight.⁴

But if Buber is example and not fishpond, if what one seeks to learn from him is not a content to be taken over but a way to be followed because it lies along one's own beginning way, then one cannot "lift out just the pieces that are wanted to bear out some theory or observation"⁵ but must read to learn why they have happened there. If we hope to be led by Buber to a quickening of our own theological understanding then we must receive from him more than literal knowledge of an abstractable content, for as R. P. Blackmur discerns, "Literal knowledge is dead knowledge; and the worst bewilderment - which is always only comparative - is better than death."⁶

We are therefore made to recognize that the way to an understanding of Buber's theology lies through attention to his way of theologizing, to his way of shaping,⁷ achieving, discovering and evaluating content,⁸ to his art which Kenneth Burke would call his "strategy".⁹ We discover that the relation between form and content, technique and subject, is strangely reversible. Erich Heller remarks that Nietzsche "saw and knew that the artist experiences what all non-artists call form as the content and the thing itself."¹⁰ Often for a poet it is precisely the formal problem which is the central focus of his efforts, while the ostensible subject serves only as the necessary means to such exploration:

Is not the myth of authority in Coriolanus the technical innovation that moves, and it may be deforms, that tragedy? Is not the nominalism in Pirandello the technical agent in his plays

and tales that keeps the wheels of action turning?.....If the dominant ideas of a work may have a technical function, can not we also ask, are not the technical resources and limits of literature sometimes the object.....of the work? Do not these technical devices often absorb and replace the so-called subject matter?.....Does not the "subject" of the poem.....appear as the product or discovery of the joint operation?¹¹

The true statement about the content is given in the form. As Kenneth Burke puts this: in the depths of his imagery the artist cannot lie.¹² Buber himself puts it much the same way:

When a great man speaks, he need not tell us about his character in order to reveal it to us. Language itself takes care of that. No matter what he communicates to us, the language he uses for this purpose expresses him and provides us access to him.....The particular word order and word formation, the rhythmic flow of vowels and consonants, are the product of a special human pattern.¹³

And in writing of poetry he has said:

We call poetry the not very frequently appearing form of words that imparts to us a truth which cannot come to words in any other manner than in this one, in the manner of this form.....Bound up with (this) is the problematic of the interpretation of poetry insofar as it seeks anything further than that the word compound be more adequately perceived.¹⁴

For Buber himself the search for theological understanding has presented itself as a search for forms. We miss what is important to Buber unless we pay heed to this reaching for a way of speaking. Buber's turning to tale and novel, to translation and imitation, as well as to more scholarly modes of exposition, suggests how much form matters to Buber.

In For the Sake of Heaven Buber lets the Yehudi express the importance of the "how":

"There was a time," said the Yehudi after a while, "when I wondered whether we are really indispensable.....whether it might not suffice that the sacred writings exist.....And, of course, I came to the conclusion that that is impossible.....because God is concerned not only over what we do and do not do, but also over the manner in which we do that which we do." 15

Often in the introductions to his books, Buber tries to describe how the way of saying and the full understanding of what is to be said are discovered together: the writing of I and Thou must wait until he receives the right word;¹⁶ For the Sake of Heaven is put aside for a quarter of a century until its form has so ripened that the actual writing seems almost to be a copying.¹⁷ The question of form is thus not something which we impose on Buber's theology; it is already present.

— Attention to form means care for the detail, for Buber's words and not only for his definition of the word. What such attention implies, the poet and the literary critic may help us understand. W. H. Auden's description of the young poet's serving an apprenticeship to a master poet whose style he seeks to imitate in order to learn what poetic formation means may serve us as an image of how closely we must learn to follow if we want to uncover Buber's "style", the shape of his specific meaning.¹⁸ The apprentice poet learns, says Auden, that "it is impossible to do a

recognizable imitation of a poet without attending to every detail of his diction, rhythm and habits of sensibility."¹⁹ The critic, too, affirms that the way to understanding lies through close attention to the details. R. P. Blackmur speaks of the first function of criticism as "promoting intimacy with particulars".²⁰ Attention to form means "verbal research". It means discovering "the rationale of what the artist does with his dominant convictions or obsessions or insights or visions", the principal recurrent or "precious" words and then reading them in their context.²¹ It means tracing the sources of vocabulary and imagery:

Words and their intimate arrangements, must be the ultimate as well as the immediate source of every effect in the written or spoken arts. Words bring meaning to birth and themselves contained the meaning as an imminent possibility before the pangs of junction. To an individual artist the use of words is an adventure in discovery; the imagination is heuristic among the words it manipulates.²²

Attention to forms also means attention to the choice of literary forms or genres. It will be important for us to understand why Buber lays aside fictional modes of expression at the time of the first World War and why he returns to them during the second war; we shall want to notice how the project of Biblical translation leads into the works of Biblical commentary. Because in Buber this search for the form is recognized as part of the theological task, we are prepared to discover form and content, and mode of formulation and theological understanding, changing together. We learn that the

shift between the kind of writing Buber found appropriate in the early period sometimes labelled "mystical" or "poetic" and that turned to when Biblical interpretation became the central task demands changes, also, in the response requested of us.

Attention to form also means attention to the form of the life work as a whole. The organizing principle of our study must be one which takes into account that Buber's works are written on the way. It must see them as movements forward in time not as a completed whole to be arranged topically. Yet when we read Buber's works "in order" we also discover a circling back again and again to images and events first introduced in the earliest books. These images are brought into the new present, not through simple repetition but through re-interpretation. Thus Buber's meeting with the linden tree is for him unforgettable though at first he speaks of feeling its bark as his own skin,²³ and then, in I and Thou, of its being bodied over against him,²⁴ and finally of its waiting for him in order to become green.²⁵ Similarly the epistemological duality of classifying and making real in Daniel becomes in I and Thou the two primary words of man, "I-Thou" and "I-It". In the late lecture on "Distance and Relation" the twofoldedness of human existence consists of a "primal setting at a distance" and an "entering into relation"; the first is presupposition but not source of the other; through both man is bound up with a world which he does not himself establish.²⁶ This spiralling movement

which becomes visibly structural in I and Thou where a few soon-announced motifs are repeated again and again like a refrain, more richly burdened at each reappearance, is, in a more hidden way, the form of the life-work as a whole, a form whereby the whole life may be carried livingly into the present, a form of translation.

Buber's works must be read in order; they must be read in relation to the events and encounters in Buber's life in response to which they arise. The linden tree, the passage from the Baal-Shem's Testament, the meeting with the unknown young man, the publisher who demands a genuinely new translation, the rise of Nazi-ism and the move to Jerusalem - all of these belong to the development of Buber's theology. Buber says that since he was a young man he has understood himself as standing under the task of bringing the associations of his decisive experiences into the shared realm of human thought, not as his experiences but as the carriers of insights important also for other men.²⁷

Although the theological and the personal are thus interfused, our project is not to be confused with a biographical study nor a psychological interpretation. Buber introduces the collection of autobiographical fragments which he called Begegnung, encounters, by saying that he does not intend to speak of his personal life but only to give an account of some moments which appear on the surface to a backward looking view and are recognized as having influenced

the way and direction of this thinking.²⁸ For our purposes the work alone is relevant; we have no need to seek out a reality hidden beneath the authorial persona. Though we shall pay heed to dominant and recurrent images and themes we are not interested in reading them symptomatically, we will not aim at translating the symbols into what they "mean" in the Freudian sense, that is, into "that meaningless experience which the artist has succeeded in transcending through his poetic creation".²⁹ To read them as part of a forward movement is to care about what Buber makes of them, what they mean here in this formation, what he uses them to say. That is, the memories are seen as material subservient to the forming powers of the theological imagination, as are also those philosophical influences which for our purposes are not to be summarized as they might be in any history of modern philosophy but to be discovered working in Buber's writing. We do not reduce all Buber's work to the working-out of an Oedipus complex but rather watch how his memories of a mother who left and did not return, of a father whose favorite role was that of storyteller,³⁰ are transmuted into I and Thou.

This is not to be a biographical or psychological study but rather one which will trace the development of Buber's "theological imagination". The phrase is one I have borrowed from Father Lynch's book, Christ and Apollo,³¹ though my use of it differs somewhat from his. He intends by it to point to that dimension of the literary imagination

which recognizes that the human path to meaning lies through the definite, the temporal, the tragic, and even through our comic wish to overleap these. I mean by it rather to point to the theologian's own imaginative work, to his search for the words, images, and forms through which he may respond to the re-present God's word.

Buber's early writings are an expression of what Carl Jung calls "fantasy thinking"; they present images taken within and elaborated through a freely poetic association. Then during the 1914 war Buber learns from a failure in the interpersonal realm what it means to be responsible to an event. He discovers the tension between responsible and fanciful elaboration and turns from the unfolding of images to the speaking of word. Event occurs within the world of word. That particular event is remembered and spoken of through the primary word, I and Thou. This word, I and Thou, becomes the central word in Buber's theology; all else, he says, is but development and application. As we listen to Buber's critics we shall notice how much this word has contributed to the theological work of others. We shall see how much is missed by those who try to relegate Buber's theology to the realm of ideology but also how the critic's insistence that Buber's language, although it arises as response to event and points to event, is nevertheless metaphorical and opens the way to a theology of metaphorical or symbolic forms which Buber himself never quite reaches.

In I and Thou the emphasis is still on man's primary words. When Buber turns to the Bible, first as translator and then as interpreter, the focus shifts to God's address to man, although Buber never depreciates the creative freedom of the word of man. Through the work of Biblical translation Buber discovers the grounds of a theology of form in the Old Testament's insistence on the covenant of the absolute with the particular. In our consideration of Buber's translation we will find ourselves turning to artists and literary translators who share Buber's recognition of the importance of representing form as well as content, at least as often as we refer to biblical exegetes. When we read Buber's Biblical commentaries we shall be interested in relating his work to that of other Old Testament theologians who share his concern that the Bible be approached along the lines of its own formation. As Buber traces the way of structural metaphors, such as the kingship of God and the nabi, through the Old Testament, we again see him moving toward but never quite reaching a presentation of Biblical theology as a theology of symbolic forms. In our analysis of Buber's writing on the New Testament, we shall want to focus on how Buber relates his response to "Jesus, my brother" to his theology of the word, and on how he responds to the Christian claim that Christ is the word-event which becomes the source of understanding of all word-events.

Often in the last ten or fifteen years Buber has spoken of the "eclipse of God" and of the faithful man as

the one who remains in the posture of response even when he no longer hears the word addressed to him. In Buber's view this eclipse can only be understood if we recognize it as a problem of the imagination. The so-called "death of God" is the inevitable outcome of a metaphysical theology; a rebirth of the theological imagination might make God's light visible again.

Buber never leaves more literary modes of expression completely behind him; in the years since he went to Jerusalem he found a new form for retelling the Hasidic tales, wrote an historical chronicle based on Hasidic traditions, and also a dramatic mystery, Elijah. We shall want to look at these more imaginative writings in order to see what they add to our understanding of Buber's theological imagination.

Most recently Buber has also returned to a renewed and explicit reflection on language, particularly on the relationship between poetic and conceptual language. Here he often comes very close to the thought of Martin Heidegger, except that Buber's understanding of language leads him to a theology of word, to a deeper recognition than we find in Heidegger of the concrete situation out of which the word arises and of the presence of the particular other who is addressed.

In our tracing of this whole development many critical perspectives will seem relevant, some all along the way,

others only at a particular stage along Buber's way. As Buber's critics have discovered, it is difficult to decide whether he is best understood as a philosopher or theologian or poet.

Buber's work points to a way of understanding and doing theology which recalls Friedrich Schlegel's words:

Everything that can be done as long as theology exists apart from poetry has already been done. Therefore it is time that they should come together.³²

Notes for Chapter One:

1. Buber, Martin, For the Sake of Heaven, Meridian Books, New York, 1958, p. xiii.
2. Cf. Buber's distinction between realizing and orienting thought made in Daniel; Dialogues on Realization, Holt, Rinhart and Winston, New York, 1964, p. 64ff and discussed in Chapter 2 infra.
3. From a letter by Rilke quoted by Hopper, S. R., "On the Naming of the Gods in Holderlin and Rilke" in Michalson, Carl, Editor, Christianity and the Existentialists, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1956, p. 176.
4. Welty, Eudora, "The Acceptance of Life Is a Defense of the Story" in The New York Times Book Review, September 17, 1961, p. 6.
5. Ibid. loc. cit.
6. Blackmur, R. P., "A Critic's Job of Work" in Schorer, Mark, Editor, Criticism: The Foundations of Modern Literary Judgment, Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York, 1948, p. 310.
7. Cf. title of Ben Shahn's book, The Shape of Content, Vintage Books, New York, 1960.
8. Miller, James E., op. cit., p. 86, 87.
9. Hyman, S. E., op. cit., p. 332.
10. Heller, op. cit., p. 283.
11. Blackmur, op. cit., p. 213, 214.
12. Quoted in Hyman, op. cit., p. 348.
13. Buber, Martin, Israel and the World, Schocken Books, New York, 1963, p. 243.
14. Buber, Martin, "The Word that is Spoken", in Modern Age, Vol. 5, No. 4, Fall 1961, p. 358.
15. Buber, For the Sake of Heaven, p. 157, 158.
16. Buber, I and Thou, p. 123.
17. Buber, For the Sake of Heaven, p. xi.

18. Shahn, op. cit., p. 142.
19. Auden, op. cit., p. 38.
20. Quoted in Hyman, Stanley, Edgar, The Armed Vision, Vintage Books, New York, 1955, p. 209.
21. Blackmur, R. P., The Lion and the Honeycomb, Harcourt, Brace and World, New York, 1955, p. 210.
22. Blackmur, quoted in Hyman, op. cit., p. 197, 198.
23. Daniel, p. 54.
24. I and Thou, p. 8.
25. Buber, Martin, The Knowledge of Man, Harper & Row, New York, 1965, p. 158.
26. Ibid., p. 63.
27. Schillp and Friedman, op. cit., p. 589.
28. Buber, Martin, Begegnung, W. Kohlhammer Verlag, Stuttgart, 1961, p. 5.
29. Quoted in Heller, Erich, The Disinherited Mind, Meridian Books, Inc., New York, 1959, p. 206.
30. Buber, Begegnung, p. 5ff, 8ff.
31. Lynch, William F. S. J., Christ and Apollo, Sheed and Ward, New York, 1960.
32. Schlegel, Freidrich, Kritische Schriften, Wolf-dietrich Rash, Munich, 1956, p. 98. Schlegel says this with specific reference to philosophy, not theology.

Chapter Two

Image And Dream

A revelation:

You wake up one morning or you pause on a walk and you have a thought in your hands, a knowing thought that you see for the first time and yet which is ripe and ready as if you had formed it over a very long time. But while you are regarding it, you notice that it bears a sign: it is an image out of a place and a moment and in it the seal of a life-experience. And whether you establish your knowledge in the holiness of a silence or offer it for sale on the market of words, the sign cleaves to it.¹

As we turn to the rather neglected writings of Buber's young manhood, we are interested in the first appearance of memories and associations which continue to sustain Buber's theological imagination long after he himself comes to regard these presentations as insufficient, as too easy or too extravagantly poetic.² What we want to do here is to trace Buber's choice of literary forms during the period between the turn of the century and the beginning of the 1914 war. What can from another point of view be understood as a shift away from mysticism, as a change in Buber's understanding of the relation between God and man, will here be seen as a new interpretation of the relation between event and image and word. After a time the events themselves seem to insist on a different formation.

There are images which seem to serve Buber as the madeleine or the good-night kiss serves Proust:

The recollection of these single events in their original, qualitative content..... together with their significant associations, set the process of creative imagination in operation and sustain it. Creative imagination is creative recall. Recollection is an activity.³

In Proust this act of creative recall transmuted into a process of artistic creation is a reconstruction of the self with a unity and continuity not given in immediate experience. In Buber the purpose of such recollection is less and less seen as simple self-discovery, and yet the

recurrence of images in his whole life-work may become for us a way towards a recognition of a unity and continuity not contained in any particular work.

The images in these early writings seem often images of what Buber knows already and yet doesn't know:

Like one who for many years had had a house and was glad of it without reflecting on it and all of a sudden it strikes him: "that is a house," and he smiles. But only now does it begin to dawn on him what that is: a house; or like one who for many years lived with a wife and shared a common life with her and all of a sudden it strikes him, "that is a wife," and he smiles. But only now does it begin to dawn on him what that is: a wife.⁴

They are like initial dreams which prefigure a goal still far distant, and as in dreams these images seem to be over-determined, to permit and encourage a succession of interpretations.

The tree whose bark he feels as his own skin, the childhood image of the zaddik which arises within as self-illumination, the abyss between himself and his own true being, will all later be understood and therefore re-presented in a different way which is hinted at already but not yet understood. When Buber sees the Jew as one who must bear within himself the struggle between image-maker and prophet, when he speaks of Judaism as an ever-renewed struggle against myth, there is an as yet unrealized suggestion of his later understanding of the tension between imaginative response and the given event from which theology arises.

But in these writings Buber has not yet comprehended the opposition between theology's forming and fantasy's elaborations; here he still allows free rein to the imagination. He takes the event within and there lets it unfold as image. He seeks to renew the creative power of Hasidic imagery "out of his own blood and spirit".⁵ Retelling demands poetic association, what Carl Jung calls "fantasy thinking"⁶: one lets the image have its way, unfold its own meaning. We will often be made aware of parallels between what Buber says about finding words for the wordless experience of the mystic and what Jung says about making conscious contents of the unconscious. These works of Buber appeal to our imagination and ask us to take his images into that place in ourselves where there is water and where the reeds and grasses grow. Buber is searching here for language which will go "from the silence in one man to the silence in another",⁷ as later he will wish to speak of an event from his own life in order to point you to an event in your own. Therefore Jung's phenomenology of symbols of transformation will often seem relevant to our approach to these writings of Buber's even though Buber will much later protest that Jung reduces religion to psychic immanence.

One of Buber's first published writings was an essay on Jakob Boehme; in 1904 he prepared a dissertation on the mystics of the Reformation from Cusanus to Boehme; in 1909 he edited a collection of "ecstatic confessions". In these expositions of Christian mysticism Buber understands his

task as that of a mediator or translator, one who continues a carrying-across begun by the mystics themselves over the abyss between true being and us. We do not find here the recognition that being itself is meeting, is word like, which Buber expresses in I and Thou. In his introduction Ekstatische Konfessionen he says that there is always something between us and true being, "an emotion, a picture or a word."⁸ We see only a concealment but as a conceal-ing. Buber understands the mystic's expression much as Heidegger understands that of the artist in his analysis of the origin of the work of art. The mystic's image or word like "the world" in Heidegger's interpretation makes apparent the earth, origin, as that which remains undisclosable.⁹ The mystic shapes his words so that like a torso of Michelangelo's which still seems imprisoned in the rough stone they express the activity of forming. At this time Buber would like Max Picard point to silence as the origin of speech; he could say as Picard does: "Real speech is in fact nothing but the resonance of silence."¹⁰ Buber seeks to represent the mystic's attempt to bring the timeless into time, to clothethe wordless in word and so he turns to an almost visual word making to suggest this transition from the realm of vision. Images are what make possible the transition from the mystic's solitary silence to the shared world of word. As Picard also says, "the position of the picture is between silence and language".¹¹

This conception is still evident in Buber's 1910 essay on Taoism in which he speaks of the "real teaching" as beyond the scientific realm of what is or the ethical realm of what ought to be; it is on the other side of words. Word and image lie between true being and the everyday world; they try to bridge and heal the gap between them. Lao-tse's utterances seem to Buber almost wholly a speech of images and thus very close to the unclothed unity. The way that can be named is not the way:

The way itself is like something
Seen in a dream, elusive, evading one.
In it are images, elusive, evading one.
In it are things like shadows in twilight.¹²

The mystic's word is not an answer but an unfolding, a ripened fulfillment in a central human life.¹³ Buber who as a student was encouraged in his study of mysticism by his teachers, Wilhelm Dilthey and Georg Simmel,¹⁴ clearly approaches it from the point of view of lebensphilosophie and so values in it the experiential, the creative, and the intuitive. He is looking to the mystic for an image of the creative man and thus what interests him most in Taoism is the picture of the creating man as the unified man, the one who calls forth by listening to the tao (the way or the speech) of the things and thus makes the latent unity living and manifest. The analogy between the holy man and the artist suggested here fits in perfectly with the understanding of religion which Buber has at this time. Religion is seen as a facet of the whole creative realm of human experiencing.

To be man, truly man, is to be artist, a fashioner of images. The correlation of religion and art and image-making and the focus on modes of expression which are at least metaphorically visual appear also in the book on Jewish painting which Buber edited in 1903 and for which he wrote an introduction and an article.¹⁵

But note, on Jewish painting. Until now Buber's interest had been directed to Christian (and somewhat to oriental) mystics, especially those most congenial to lebensphilosophie, but here he seems to begin with an image reality that is set before him and which he himself is, that of the Jew. The dasein of the Jew presents itself and asks to be interpreted, now and often again. Since at this time to be a man is to be an artist the question becomes that of the Jew as artist. This same concern was expressed in Buber's efforts to make Zionism not just a political but also a cultural renewal movement, to make it a Weltanschauung, a way of viewing the world. He would like it to be possible to be a Zionist "as one is a man or an artist".¹⁶ One thinks of Joyce for whom Stephen and Bloom, artist and Jew, in their search for one another are man.

In the book on painters Buber wants to widen, to humanize more fully, what being a Jew means. The introduction includes his first analysis of the psychological structure of the Jew: who is more ear-man than eye-man and more time-man than space-man, who sees the together-hangingness of things

more than separate phenomena, whose hearing is of all his senses the most important in forming his world-picture.¹⁷ Yet now Buber calls the Jew who has never been an eye-man nor a picturer to be one, and to make his God, the God of history and of the call to the human soul, into a God of nature, of "in beauty flowering" energy, a God who can be "imaged" not only presented through dialogue. The distinctiveness of the Jew and the otherness of his God are to be dissolved.

The book is on painters but Buber says that his real interest is in the art of the poet. A Jewish renewal must mean a new "Stimme", a new voice, not just a new "Weltanschauung", way of looking. There is need of the searcher who returns the past to us with its meaning for a new future, for the poet who is the "gatherer and enlarger of speech", who makes the speech and rhythm of everyday lovely and surrounds it with a new splendor.¹⁸

The theme of vitalization, the call to a romp in the sun-filled open from out of the narrow confines of the ghetto is prominent also in the Yiddish literature of this time. This literature, especially the tales of Mendele, is in many ways a response to the same impulses as Buber's early work. To recognize this parallel is to realize that in order to understand Buber we must take into account the influence of his east European Jewish background as well as of his German teachers. For Buber art is now important primarily as a way

of self-discovery; Jewish art would thus make possible a Jewish self-discovery, which is just what Irving Howe suggests this Yiddish writing did. Howe says that for the Yiddish-speaking Jew of this period this literature in some sense fulfilled the function of both religion and nation, since it provided the materials, the images, for a sense of national identity. By focusing on the life of dispersion it released the deepest impulses of that life and provided a means of both consecrating and transcending the shetl.¹⁹

Throughout the years between 1900 and 1913 Buber continues to circle around the image of the Jew. He seems to have begun with knowing it to be, somehow, paradigmatic for him of the human, to have sensed that his way toward self-discovery must lead through self-discovery as a Jew. Buber's conviction doesn't seem to have been a "logical" one, derived from the Biblical understanding of the relation of God and man and of the special vocation of the Jew for the fulfillment of this relationship. Instead he seems to have begun with the image, the sign: that there is still such a thing as a Jew and I am one; then as the significance of this sign unfolds, he comes closer and closer to a Biblical understanding.

In his 1911 talks on Judaism he says that to ask "What does it mean to be a Jew?" is to ask "What does this reveal about what it is to be a man?" He wants to make being a Jew more difficult in a Kierkegaardian way, so that

it means not just an external, abstract relation to dogma, law and cult, but finding one's people in oneself and not just around one. Their past becomes our memory and their future hope our personal task. We discover how the deep destiny of blood colors and tones our very thinking and willing. To belong to a people means to share this inner way of experiencing not the externally binding elements of homeland, language, customs, though we may first sense our belongingness through experiencing the outer bonds.²⁰ Buber then goes on to speak of the contemporary western Jew (and here of course he is most clearly speaking of himself) who experiences a duality within, a broken-apartness, disintegration, because his inner and outer bindings are not with the same people.²¹ Yet, he suggests, perhaps the alienation of the modern Jew is but a new form taken by the struggle within himself that has characterized the Jew through all times. Because in the modern Jew the struggle between prophet and idolator lives on, he experiences a deep forkedness in himself at his deepest hours. He is this struggle, and it is this that makes him a symbol of man as such; this, and his striving for one-ness. Here Buber is close to Freud for whom, also, man is such a struggle and who also thought it more than accidental that it should be a Jew who should announce this as his psychoanalytic theory does. Freud, indeed, seems to epitomize Buber's vision of the Jew, one whose creativity is directed toward unification of the self. It is the Jew's role, Buber says, to feel this conflict, to

become master not slave of this polarity, to say "yes" to this whole Jewish existence, to the struggle itself.²²

This recognition of the special vocation of the Jew seems to have come to Buber when suddenly his image of the Jew is fleshed and made particular as he recalls his original childhood image of the true Jew, the Galician zaddik. In his search to know his own people in an immediate eye to eye way he again began to read Hebrew which he had neglected since his boyhood. One day these words from the testament of the Baal-Shem, the founder of Hasidism, flashed toward him:

He takes unto himself the quality of fervor. He arises from sleep with fervor for he is hallowed and become another man and is worthy to create and is become like the Holy One, blessed be He, when He created His world.²³

The advent of these words is for Buber his moment of self-discovery, and at the same time he becomes aware of a summons to proclaim his insight to the world. The image of the man worthy to create works creatively on him and leads him into his own creating, to the first writing that seems genuinely his own. In the books that follow he seeks to retell Hasidic tales and legends so as to represent the creativity of the Baal-Shem and the Hasidic master, Rabbi Nachman.

As the Greeks knew the Muses are daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne, memory: with this experience of re-creation, this impulse to new creation, appears an image out of another time and place: "The image out of my childhood, the memory

of the zaddik and his community, rose upward and illuminated me: I recognized the idea of the perfected man." 24 The childhood image stems from the years spent in his grandfather's house:

I realized at that time, in the dirty village of Sadagora from the dark Hasidic crowd that I watched - as a child realizes such things, not as thought but as image and feeling - that the world needs the perfected man and that the perfected man is none other than the true helper..... When I saw the rebbe striding through the rows of the waiting, I felt "leader", and when I saw the hasidim dance with the Torah, I felt "community".25

This image which had already in his later boyhood begun "to slip away from me into the unconscious" now rose upward again.

With this image another also comes to awareness, the image of the abyss between himself and his own true being. Buber writes: so long as I lived with my grandfather my roots were firm:

Soon after I left his house, the whirl of the age took me in. Until my twentieth year, and in small measure even beyond then, my spirit was in steady and multiple movement, in an alternation of tension and release, determined by manifold influences, taking ever new shape, but without center and without growing substances: it was really "olam-ha-Tohu, the World of Confusion, the mythical dwelling place of the wandering souls."26

Again and again this image of Nietzschean abyss, of Heraclitean whirl, will re-appear, for "finality does not rule here":

The same basic structure of the occurrence, however, only become briefer and harder, we re-encounter in innumerable situations in our later lives.²⁷

Much later Buber speaks of the way of whirl, of indecision, as a play with possibility:

In the swirling space of images, through which (man) strays, each and every thing entices him to be made incarnate by him; he grasps at them like a wanton burglar, not with decision, but only in order to overcome the tension of omnipossibility.²⁸

By then Buber will understand the opposition between the directed man and the man who wanders in confusion as an antithesis between the man who indulges in fantasy, in evil imagining, and the man worthy to create. But he already sees that the man who gives himself over to the arbitrary poisons experience, for already while it is taking place he is dominated by the will to produce. In contrast to him Buber presents a picture of the truly creative man in the short dialogue "Productivity and Existence" written in 1914:

"A remarkable and charming man, your friend," said the professor; "but what does he really do" I mean.....in the intellectual sphere?" "In the intellectual sphere....." I answered. "H'mmm in the intellectual sphere.... he is simply there..... He contents himself for the most part with images. When they want to combine and condense into a thought, he gladly helps them." ²⁹

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The summons to proclaim which accompanied the Baal-Shem's flashing words led Buber to such a glad helping. Indeed, for a time now "he contents himself for the most part with images". The task is still that of the re-presentation of mysticism but now of Jewish mysticism, that is, Hasidism. What attracts Buber initially is not the teachings of the Hasids but their tales and traditions. He begins by retelling stories first told by one of the later masters, Rabbi Nachman.

The tales come late in Nachman's life; the Hasidic anthologies are full of aphorisms from an earlier period. But what is important to Buber about Nachman is, of course, that he is a story-teller, perhaps the first real story-teller among the Jews. "All earlier tales were anonymous creation; here there is present, for the first time, the person - personal intention and personal formation." ³⁰ In the already mentioned collection of Yiddish stories, Nachman's are described as "neither illustrations nor extensions of Hasidic doctrine: they are embodiments of it, living emblems of its meaning and power." ³¹

Buber is at first repelled by the Hebrew in which so much of the Hasidic teaching is recorded, by its "ungainliness", "unshapeliness", almost as though he were applying the standards of Renaissance painting to Byzantine mosaics or to Picasso. For the awkwardness and abruptness which here disturbs Buber may in fact be something which

characterizes the Hebrew language and which expresses its understanding of reality. In Mimesis, Erich Auerbach makes a comparison between the literary style of the Odyssey and of the Genesis account of Abraham and Isaac which seems relevant here.³¹ In the Odyssey there is a leisurely progression with uninterrupted connections, fully externalized descriptions with all events taking place in a uniformly illuminated foreground. Whereas in the Abraham story there is no place description, only the voice coming out of hiddenness and Abraham's answering "Here I am" which presents his psychological situation, his being-there before God; then there is the journey whose whole meaning lies in the moment toward which they are going. Buber hears the difference already, just as he has recognized that for the Jew the ear is more important than the eye, time more than space, but he does not yet appreciate it. His conception of retelling is still a very painterly one, the nachbildung of a vorbild. At this time it is the rhythm, the unique qualities of the language he is translating into, that are the governing, guiding ones.

Buber speaks of his disappointment with his first attempts at translating two of Rabbi Nachman's fairy tales which seemed to make only more visible the distortions he found in the stories as transmitted: "the distortion of the contents through all kinds of utilitarian and vulgar-rationalistic insertions, of the form through the confusion of lines and the muddying of the pure colors." ³³ In

Irving Howe's collection of Yiddish tales there is a translation of one of Nachman's stories, "A Tale of a Candelabrum",³⁴ which shows us what these tales are like apart from Buber's reshaping. This story is much more didactic, more forcedly paradoxical, more stripped to the narrative bone, than any of Buber's versions except perhaps "The Steer and the Ram", the first story on which Buber worked which he was willing to include in his book, The Tales of Rabbi Nachman. He says that he found it even at that time "still shy and awkward" and then left it out of the 1927 edition because "its content had become too strange".³⁵ It centers around an allegorical, hidden and magical, understanding of the Jewish prayer shawl and holy straps, an arbitrary kind of image which Buber found most uncongenial.

Buber found that he had to tell the stories from out of himself, "as a true painter takes into himself the lines of the models and achieves the genuine image out of the memory formed of them".³⁶ One of these tales ("The Master of Prayer") is in fact more a picture, a putting into images of the kabbalistic teaching about the scattering of the Shekina (God's presence in the world) than it is a narrative recreation of event. There are lovely descriptions for each of the ways that God is present in the world, for each of the values that man has chosen to regard as ultimate: the master of prayer who lives "far from the dwellings of the earthly on a silent sea shaded round by trees" but at times visits the world and engages in conversation with another who may open

his ear then follow him to his settlement by the shore; the beautiful queen, tranquil in her anguish; the child who runs alone and laughs. Redemption is "opening the ways" that go between the different lands in which these people rule; but there is one land whose separation seems far more hopeless, the country of wealth. In describing its plight the master of prayer uses words that suggest Gabriel Marcel's distinction between being and having:

Wherever a man adheres to being something or doing something, there his roots remain in the human, and out of his roots he can become whole, and in whatever he engages himself, in knowledge or in the word, in beauty or in joy, in death or in eternal honor, he can be saved through himself and can himself establish his life. But where man adheres to the illusion of possessing something, there he tears up his roots out of the human; they no longer draw up healing to him from out of the human earth, and I know no help for him.³⁷

Finally, it is the laugh of the child, her joy, that sprouts in the deaf hearts of the people of this land, and leads even them to cry, "Help".

Buber had found these tales in a form in which folk-fantasy had already been at work upon them and he discovered that a new forming, not just a simple translation, was called for:

Out of the traditional material, through addition and elimination, through re-shaping and above all through Buber's own artful, architectonic, meaning-relating structure a new world was created which let the old Hasidic world rise again and which also was an expression of Buber's personality.³⁸

Buber speaks of his work as a "re-creation", not a translation but a re-telling "with full freedom out of his spirit as it is present to me." ³⁹ "Even in the new pieces that I inserted my unity with the spirit of Rabbi Nachman: more adequately than the direct disciples, I received and completed the task, a later messenger in a foreign realm." ⁴⁰

Robert Lowell has a book of poems, *Imitations*, which seems to grow from the same understanding of what it is to translate. In his introduction he says:

Boris Pasternak has said that the usual reliable translator gets the literal meaning but misses the tone, and that in poetry tone is of course everything. I have.....labored hard to get the tone. Most often this has been a tone, for the tone is something that will always more or less escape transference to another language and cultural moment..... I believe that the poetic translation - I would call it imitation - must be expert and inspired and needs at least as much technique luck, and rightness of hand as an original poem.⁴¹

He continues with some examples of the license he has taken, such as "unclotting" Mallarme, "not because I disapprove of his dense medium but because I saw no way of giving it much power in English."

Much of the Hasidic teaching was preserved in Hebrew but the language of these tales was not Hebrew but Yiddish, that "tenderly blunt, melancholy and bitter idiom in which the young Nachman spoke to God and was not answered", ⁴² a language so much more congenial to Buber, "suited to the

picaresque or the lyric",⁴³ more leisurely, more spacious, more intimate:

Near and beneath Hebrew flowed another language, Yiddish. Untended, elbowed away from the place of honor, it nonetheless grew freely and richly. Based originally on a mixture of Middle-High-German dialects, it soon acquired an international scope, borrowing freely from almost every Indo-European language. The interplay of the language of piety, Hebrew, with the language of the street and home, Yiddish, made for remarkable literary effects. Yiddish itself was a language of great plasticity, neither set nor formalized, always in a rapid process of growth and dissolution; it was a language intimately reflecting the travail of wandering, exile, dispersion; a language drenched with idiom.....a blend of speech so persistently complex and ironic - really a kind of underground speech - so as to quality severely the very values it was dedicated to defend.⁴⁴

In translating from Yiddish to German, in surrounding this everyday speech and rhythm with a new elegance, Buber is able to retain the possibility of an accumulation of sensuous impression or a winding oral narrative, the plasticity and the wandering quality, are retained, but seems to lose the self-reflective irony.

What makes Buber feel of "one spirit" with Nachman is that even he had consciously been a re-newer, as are Buber and Perez and Kafka now. They give new shape to the old themes, and take on themselves the responsibility for renewal, as Stephen Daedalus does:

April 26....Welcome, O life! I go to encounter for the millioneth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race.

April 27. Old father, old artificer, stand me now and forever in good stead.⁴⁵

It should, however, be noted that although Buber's retelling is a re-forming, a re-creating, it is this in a very conservative sense. There is not the radically new sense of how one tells a story, of how myths are to be brought into the present, that we find, for example, in Ulysses two decades later; nor even the kind of use of Hasidic tales as material that we find in Perez, whose stories become parables of the distance between himself, the modern intellectual, and the pieties to which he turns. We see this, for example, in "If Not Higher" in the way he presents the story about the sceptical Litvak who discovers the rabbi of Nemerov bringing wood to a sick Jewish woman while his people think he is in heaven.⁴⁶

The second story to which Buber turned and the first with which he was truly satisfied, is the tale of "The Clever Man and the Simple Man". Here he has achieved the shapeliness and sense of a sunlit timeliness which he sought. It is the classic tale of the brilliant young man who went out into the world and mastered all its arts and the simple one who stayed in the village as a rather clumsy cobbler yet was nonetheless joyous and in good spirits from morning until evening:

"Woman, put out for me at once the barley-broth!" Then she handed him a piece of dry bread. And while he consumed it, he said, "Wife, your barley broth has never been so good as it is today! So, now give me a fine piece of roast!" Then she handed him once more a good slice of bread.⁴⁷

Then in the story each is called by a king whom neither sees. The simple man, once he is convinced it is not a jest, goes and becomes prime minister. The clever one doubts:

Who am I that a mighty king desires to see me? Does he not have enough noble vassals and profound counselors at his court that he should send for me?....It is impossible, you must recognize that no king could do the like. Evil-minded men have deluded you when they bid you come to me with his message. The truth is that the king does not exist at all.⁴⁸

And, sure enough, although the two, the clever man and the messenger, search all through the kingdom, they are never able to find any one who has seen the king until they come to the simple man who sees him daily. "What makes you think," jeered the clever man, "that he with whom you speak is actually the king?"

We are reminded here of Kafka, of Kafka's desperate attempt to get in touch with the castle, of the Chinese Emperor's message to his humble subject, but there is not here the desperateness of Kafka's picture of the hopeless, inescapable paradox of faith. Kafka presents the world surrealistically, as it appears to the man anxiously searching for meaning in a world without coherence, a world of disorder and senseless repetition, a world of nightmare; Buber's world is more that of the daydream.

Often in these stories Buber presents us with a contrast between two ways of being in the world, between men

governed by two opposed impulses, but these are tales, fairy tales, and so the opposition is always played out on an externalized level. The focus is not on inner reflection nor on dramatic conflict but on the patterned relationship working itself out. As in Jung's model of the psyche, the assumption here seems to be that the opposing poles are essentially complementary. The two poles are related through being joined in one event, one story. Because the relationship is thought of as an event, a happening, it means story, story as narrative progression, as temporal unfolding. We do not have here the simultaneity or circling re-occurrence we find in Proust or Kafka. But because these are tales, fairy tales, the conclusions are not tragic or comic, but only optimistic or nostalgic.

Buber began with the tales but in bringing them to us he prefaces his book with several introductory chapters. Buber seems to need exposition to enable us to apprehend the meaning of the tales because in his retelling they have become more image or melody than word. He sees that poetic form and prosaic content need each other but has not here managed to integrate them. When the book first appeared, this introduction was described by a reviewer as prose of a quality to earn for Buber the name of a master stylist,⁴⁹ yet it came to seem to Buber himself "extravagant". In later editions he eliminated overflowing and archaic phrasings, toned down the superlatives and the sharp formulations.⁵⁰

The introduction begins with a chapter on Jewish mysticism and its relation to the ecstatic wisdom of Eckhart, Plotinus and Laotse. What is important here - at least in relation to our particular quest - is the explanation of how a mystic comes to be telling stories. He contrasts the Jewish tendency to be loquacious about the alien with the silence of the mystic. What distinguishes Jewish mysticism, i.e., Hasidism, is its emphasis on self-unfolding rather than self-restraining, on joy rather than asceticism, on man's activity in mystic ecstasy as a co-working with God. The final aim of the individual is to become himself a teaching; here there is neither silence nor talking but life as word.⁵¹

The mystic's prayer, he writes, is not from I to Thou but God himself speaking the innermost word within. This is the event, God's speaking within; the external word is only its garment. Buber says of Nachman:

The teaching is with him at first an event and only then becomes a thought, that is a word. "I have in me", he said, "teachings without clothes, and it is very hard for me until they clothe themselves."⁵²

This is a metaphor already used in the Zohar:

Thus had the Torah not clothed herself in garments of this world, the world could not endure it. The stories of the Torah are thus only her outer garments, and whoever looks upon the garment as being the Torah itself, woe to that man.⁵³

This conception of word is at this time also Buber's own. Word is a form for wordless meaning rather than a response

to an address. The original event is not really a word-event. "In prayer, Nachman says, the external words are meant to crumble to ashes so that only the will and fervor, the kavana, the intention, ascend. In these tales again and again the true voice of a person or thing is referred to as a wordless melody. The "master of the word" is the one found singing to himself, not addressing a crowd of people, and when he stops,

the song of the man was around him and lived in all places and yet was always different and new, for each of the things sang it in its own good way. The things and beings relayed the song; the air itself became a singing mouth and bore the melody into the worlds.⁵⁴

The nigun, the melody, not the words is the essence of the song. Melody includes the tone, the inner feeling, the spiritual line:

In one of Peretz's stories, "Between Two Mountains", followers of two Hasidic sects dispute over the nigunim of their masters, and it soon becomes clear that far more than the mere melodies - nothing less, in fact, than their very moral essence - of their songs is at stake.⁵⁵

In his retelling Buber seeks to reproduce the nigun. Like Jung when he interprets dreams, Buber begins with the image in its visual aspect rather than with the verbal report on it and with the image pattern that is the shaping force of the whole rather than with separated out-of-context elements. Often in reading we have a sense that the directing line has come from the source, as though Buber's work

were an orchestration or a watercolor done from a black and white sketch. At this time Buber applauds the Hasidic enthusiasts who dare to join their rambling dreams to the given text,⁵⁶ although later he will be just as suspicious of the kind of arbitrary elaboration suggested by this phrase as is the father in the tale of "The Rabbi and His Son".

Nachman speaks of this mystery of communication thus:

At times my words enter like a silence into the hearers and rest in him and work later, like slow medicines; at times my words do not at first work at all in the man to whom I say them, but when he says them to another, they come back to him and enter into his heart in great depth and do their work in perfection.⁵⁷

This recognition, that sometimes understanding comes only when we ourselves undertake the retelling, is what Buber himself experienced. The telling takes place within a whole chain of tellings; the telling is fulfilled when the hearer becomes a speaker. These were originally told stories, remembered in being retold. There is a tradition that the disciple who eventually wrote them down used, to be sure not to forget them, to tell each tale to two others immediately after hearing it.⁵⁸

Originally there was also always an outward occasion; Buber seems purposefully to mention these settings in the introduction and not to have them before us when telling the tales themselves, so that his retellings are given an added aura of the timeless. In a later essay on Nachman which is

included in the most recent edition of the Tales, Buber indicates the relationship between an event in Nachman's personal life and the plot of one of these stories. He describes the misunderstanding with an Arab in an inn that becomes the encounter with the Satanic merchant in "The Rabbi and His Son", and says, "We here gain a particular insight into the symbolically legendary way in which Nachman experiences his life." ⁵⁹ As Freud analyzed the dream-work's transformation of the unacceptable into the acceptable, so here Buber is pointing to the imagination's work of transforming private experience into art. What Nachman accomplished here is what Buber by then understands as his own task: to bring, translate, the associations of his own decisive experiences into the inter-personal realm so that they are no longer only his own experiences. ⁶⁰

In Buber's retelling, Nachman's teachings are not only clothed but well-dressed, with the introduction as an outer garment. The stories have been given a charming style but there is little sense of Nachman's voice, of his style, little that is particularly Jewish in rhythm or aura or point. Buber's poeticization which presents symbol as image and event as pattern seems quite soon even to him an apprentice's achievement.

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Buber's next book, The Legend of the Baal-Shem, also has its source in traditional legends, but what he sought to do here was not to retell stories that the Baal-Shem had himself told but rather from the tales told about him to "reconstruct the inner process in the life of the master". In his essay on Taoism Buber distinguished two forms in which the teaching is brought to word: parable, the word of the creating man himself, and myth, the reflection of his life's impact on the consciousness of the age. In this sense, Nachman's tales were parable and the aim now is to recompose myth. Again Buber had begun by translating and again found that more was required: the stories did not become any "more winged" in translation than they had been in the crude and clumsy original. He discovers that the more independent his narration became, the more "faithful" it seems to be:

And therefore although by far the largest part of the book is autonomous fiction composed from traditional motifs, I might honestly report of my experience of the legend: I bore in me the blood and spirit of those who created it and out of my blood and spirit it has become new.⁶¹

Retelling means making present again the new-ness, the living speaking-ness of the word:

I stand in the chain of narrators, a link between links; I tell once again the old stories, and if they sound new, it is because the new already lay dormant in them when they were told for the first time.⁶²

In his 1955 "Foreword" he says:

The existing material was so formless that I was tempted to deal with this as with some kind of subject-matter for poetry. That I did not succumb to this temptation I owe to the power of the Hasidic point of view that I encountered in all these stories. But within these limits, which forbid the bringing in of alien motifs, all freedom remained to the epic form.⁶³

But, although he is writing within a "spell", the spell the Hasidic legends have cast over him, Buber feels he has resisted the temptation of a poetic recreation. In Daniel Buber describes the lyric situation as that of the "unmediated polarity of the soul" in which the poet addresses his own other pole.⁶⁴ This suggests that by a "poetic" response Buber means one that would have been too much the expression of his personal unconscious.

There is here a felt limit on the freedom of retelling, a sense that "alien motifs" are forbidden. The discovery of the interdependence of freedom and faithfulness suggests what Buber writes of the artist as "onlooker" some twenty years later:

The onlooker is not at all intent. He takes up the position which lets him see the object freely, and undisturbed awaits what will be presented to him. Only at the beginning may he be ruled by purpose, everything beyond that is involuntary. He does not go around taking notes indiscriminately, he lets himself go, he is not in the least afraid of forgetting something ("Forgetting is good", he says). He gives his memory no tasks, he trusts its organic work which preserves what is worth preserving....He pays no attention to traits ("Traits leads astray", he says). What stands out for him from the object is what is not "character" and not "expression".⁶⁵

Buber refers to his retelling here as an epic one. In Daniel he says that in the epic form the fates speak along with the writer whose role it now is to interpret their replies.⁶⁶ In epic there is a meaningfulness beyond the personal; what happens here concerns human destiny as such; narrative and deed arise out of an historical and supernatural background.⁶⁷ But in this case Buber makes no attempt, except somewhat in the expository introductory section, to represent the "real" life in its world-historical connections nor even to suggest the local atmosphere of the shetl setting. "I only desire to convey the relation to God and the world that these men intended, willed and sought to live.....I build up his life out of his legends which contain the dream and longing of a people."⁶⁸ In this sense this is still a "poetic" telling, one which reconstructs the life using only the subjective pattern of significant associations and not the objective structure of verifiable biographical and historical events; it does not focus on "the inseparable intermixture of the two dimensions."⁶⁹ Buber does not yet seek to reconstruct the intended occurrence of each individual story as he does in The Tales of the Hasidim⁷⁰ nor to ask "what event in real life could have been experienced in such a way as to lead to this interpretation?" as he does in Moses⁷¹ (and in that last added chapter of the Nachman book when he presents Nachman's own adventure with the Arab).

Buber says that what he is presenting here is myth, the myth of the Baal-Shem-Tov, a Jewish myth. Myth is to him that which has at all times vitalized and yet also endangered Jewish religiousness. He sees Judaism as the fight against myth, not the victory over it but precisely the conflict. Myth, as such, apart from its particular content, is the sign, the image, the expression of the fullness of existence, of the one which everywhere presents itself in new disguises.⁷² An essay on "Myth in Judaism" written during this same period also shows that for Buber at this time myth is imaginative expression not memory's response to event.⁷³

In Nachman the tales were thought of as "clothing" to the teaching, now they are its "body",⁷⁴ they embody it, body it forth. Legend is now understood as "messenger", as already "translation". Buber makes a distinction here between legend, the form that myth takes within Judaism, and myth as it is elsewhere:⁷⁵

The legend is the myth of the calling. In it the original personality of myth is divided. In pure myth there is no division of essential being. It knows multiplicity but not duality. Even the hero only stands on another rung than that of the god, not over against him; they are not the I and the Thou. The hero has a mission but not a call. He ascends but he does not become transformed. The god of pure myth does not call, he begets; he sends forth the one whom he begets, the hero. The god of the legend calls forth the son of man - the prophet, the holy man.

The legend is the myth of I and Thou, of the caller and the called.....The legend of the Baal-Shem is not the history of a man but the history of the calling.⁷⁶

"The myth of the I and the Thou" - "familiar as a word that you always have at hand and believe you know - although it has never occurred to you to regard it." ⁷⁷ Here, as often again, it seems as though Buber had quickly set down a phrase which he understands more and more as his life continues.

If the legend of the Baal-Shem is a myth but the myth of a calling, is his still a face of "the hero with a thousand faces"? Does he follow the "standard path of the mythological adventure of the hero"? Joseph Campbell speaks of a "monomyth", "the one shapeshifting yet marvelously constant story" in which

a hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder; fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won; the hero comes back from the mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man.⁷⁸

Campbell's understanding of the hero's deed is one which does not recognize the ultimate duality of "legend":

The two - the hero and his ultimate god, the seeker and the found - are thus understood as the outside and inside of a single self-mirrored mystery, which is identical with the mystery of the manifest world. The great deed of the supreme hero is to come to the knowledge of this unity in multiplicity and then to make it known.⁷⁹

For Buber the distinction between legend and myth is decisive; as he comes to a deeper appreciation of its meaning he sees that the difference is also a formal one, that the Hasidic legend cannot be expressed with the austerity appropriate to

the Buddhist myth nor with the intimacy of the Franciscan. He begins now a search for the appropriate form for the myth of the calling which is continued in I and Thou, in his Tales of the Hasidim, and in the chronicle, For the Sake of Heaven. However in The Legend of the Baal-Shem Buber failed to find a form which would express the peculiar character of legend and so, despite the introduction, the adventures of this hero as set forth in this book fall into the pattern of the monomyth and could indeed be interpreted along the lines of the Jungian myth of the self in search of the self.

Before his presentation of the legend, Buber again gives a description of the life-experiences out of which it grows. This introduction consists of a series of meditations which unfolds through metaphor, saying, and anecdote the four moments of the Hasidic life: ecstasy, service, intention, and humility. Buber still understands Hasidism in relation to the renewing and summoning power of the Baal-Shem's words about the man who arises from sleep with fervor, hallowed and worthy to create. It is not surprising therefore that when he describes the underlying impulses of the Hasidic life he is at the same time speaking of that which has summoned him to word-making.

Ecstasy, hitlahavut, is the way to the tree of life, the key to the meaning of life. In ecstatic moments meaning blazes out at one as that night those words of the Baal-Shem about the man worthy to create had done for Buber. Ecstasy

also means inner unification and so self-trust, spontaneity:

When a man attaches himself to God, he can allow his mouth to speak what it may speak and his ear to hear what it may hear, and he will bind the things to their higher root.⁸⁰

Buber uses Nietzsche's image of the rope "stretched over the abyss".⁸¹ When he points out that the way of ecstasy is an individual way, at times it expresses itself in action, especially dance or song,⁸² but it completes itself "in its own suspension",⁸³ in relation to the other pole of the life of the holy man: service. In one of the stories retold in the central section of the book, "The Heavenly Journey", the Baal-Shem on a mystical flight comes to a wall and a decision: here is the boundary; the name of this place is God's choice. "Detach yourself from the earth and I shall open to you. Or turn back your flight." The Baal-Shem begins an answer, "I detach -" and then hears a voice from earth below, his wife's voice, calling his name, "Israel". "This", reports Buber, "was the last journey of the master in heaven." ⁸⁴ This story is amazingly like an event in Buber's own life which, however, hasn't even happened yet, but will when the unknown young man comes to visit him one forenoon in 1914. It is as though dreams did foretell the future in Jung's sense of "preparing the dreamer for the events of the following day." ⁸⁵

Ecstasy is completed in its own suspension, in service, avoda. Yet service, to begin with, means something

quite strange here: not primarily a relation to another but as in Hinduism, a part of one's own search for God, for salvation. It is self-unification, seen as task not passivity; it is saying "Enough" to the multiplicity within. Buber says that analogy for such service is myth, because myth-making is the enclosure of the infinite in a particular action, expression, or image. This is how Buber understands his own word-service. It is that through which he won release from the world of confusion; it is the bringing of the absolute into the world of forms. Service means being with the creatures and things of the world in such a way that one is really thinking of God and thus helping in the unification of God with his Shekina, his presence in the scattered things. Man is a helper in bringing about his homecoming. In Hölderlin's poem the one who helps those at home become at home is the poet.⁸⁶ Here, too, service is pre-eminently word-service. It is a prayer-event, an event in which words are addressed to God. This is the meaning of service: prayer for the sake of the Shekina: "through him, the praying man, the unification of God with his Shekina will take place."⁸⁷ So the word is deed, makes things happen; it is what relates man and God; it is the "between". Words may also get between man and God in another way; if they are spoken without true devotion, "they remain between the walls, they squat on the floor, they grow layer by layer like decaying leaves."⁸⁸ Yet "the word" here is still negun, melody. Knowing how to pray does not mean knowing what words to say in the literal

sense. Buber tells here of a little boy, too dull even to learn the shape of the letters, who is taken to the synagogue by his father. He doesn't know anything to say and yet cannot suppress his ecstasy and so tears his little whistle out of his pocket and blows it resoundingly. This boy, he says, has the power of service.⁸⁹ There is another boy, in the story called "The Prayer Book", an orphan brought up outside of Judaism by the lord of the manor, who also comes into the synagogue without knowing what to pray. He takes his mother's prayer book which he cannot read, lays it on the desk and calls, "Here, Lord of the world, you have the whole prayer book."⁹⁰ To serve means to be "a messenger boy, ready for all that God might command"; it means "becoming aware of the summons to proclaim".⁹¹ It is thus what Buber is himself about in this retelling of tales and legend which is his first response to the summons conveyed in the Baal-Shem's testament.

The third moment, intention, kavana, is "the mystery of a soul directed to its goal.....It means seeing one's planting of images as having a meaning in relation to the final end, as helping to "free the imprisoned". Buber's intention in retelling the legend is to release it for new life in the world.

Intention is the mystery of a soul directed to its goal. Again and again in these stories the Baal-Shem goes on journeys, usually night journeys, in his chariot; he has

made out of his "urges", his unconscious forces, a chariot for God.⁹² One evening he drives out with a rabbi who is most anxious to receive from him the wisdom of understanding the language of all creatures. As they ride out together the rabbi discovers to his delight that he can now understand the language of the birds. The Baal-Shem tells him to listen closely for he is about to share the heart of the mystery: "Shut yourself off in this moment from all that exists, outside of you and my words." But the rabbi cannot keep himself from listening with one ear to the marvelously sung words of the birds, and so the gift is taken from him.⁹³

Intention is helping to free the imprisoned in that space and time allotted to each:

When a Hasid cannot pray in one place and goes to another, then the first place demands of him: "Why would you not speak the holy words over me? And if there is evil in me, then it is for you to redeem me."⁹⁴

But helping has its dangers; it means going down into the chasm, the darkness, the whirlpool. Helping is here spoken of as another word-event, as an "answer" to the "demands" of the hour from that which the man is "called" to set free. Helping is a creating "and the word before all other forms of creating";⁹⁵ it means bringing to word, to consciousness.

Are we here perhaps just to say:
house, bridge, well, gate, jug, fruit tree, window-
at most, column, tower...but to say, understand
this, to say it
as the Things themselves never fervently thought
to be.
Earth, isn't this what you want: invisibly to
arise in us? ⁹⁶

Buber makes use of the Kabbalistic notion of the letters of the alphabet as symbols of the elements of the world in which the task of redemption is represented as the merging of the "lonely shy letters into the singing of the spheres";⁹⁷ but he frees the image from its allegorical lifelessness. In one of the tales, this Kabbalistic symbol becomes event. The legend reveals what is meant by calling Israel ben Eliezer, the Baal-Shem-Tov, the "master of the good name". The meaning transcends both the "powerful, efficacious knowledge of the name of God as the earlier wonder-working Baal-Shem were described, and the possession of a 'good name' in the human sense of being trusted by the people." ⁹⁸

The story is preceded by one which presents the understanding here superceded, that of a man having magical rather than creative, healing powers. A dying rabbi, who has that secret wisdom which consists of mastery over the words that compel God, is told in a dream to pass his knowledge on to Israel through his own son, who thus becomes the bearer of a word he cannot himself understand. Understanding seems here to mean having-the-right-intention-toward, for the teaching of the word enters into the Baal-Shem but the rabbi's son who studies with him has an external relation to it, wants to use it, and in using it brings disaster upon himself.⁹⁹

In this next episode, called "The Revelation", the Baal-Shem, now about thirty, is an innkeeper in the Carpathians. One day he recognizes that he stands in the midst of waiting: the peaks look down on him and wait; the springs look up at him and wait. Then between one sabbath and the next, a rabbi who has stopped at the inn becomes the witness of creation. He tries to drive off after a short rest but almost immediately finds himself in the midst of a great whirl. All the things of the world seem dislodged from their places and lost in confusion, and even within himself there is turmoil and darkness. Then the innkeeper appears, makes his way through the chaos and restores order and direction. The second day the rabbi hopefully sets out again but this time he encounters not chaos but rigidity and determinism. Heaven is a brazen, heavy shell. The things grow imprisoned and sickly in their places. He feels himself also transfixed in an inescapable prison. Again the innkeeper appears. This time he is able to "melt the shell of passivity" and the rabbi finds he can freely return to the inn. On the third day the rabbi experiences the "abyss". Everything lies in silent agony. "All things were enveloped by the abyss and yet the whole abyss was between each thing and the other." Then the helper comes once more and through his touch the things are joined and see and know and grasp one another. "They saw one another through his eyes and touched one another through his hand. And since the things came to one another, there was no longer an abyss, but a

light space of seeing and touching." During the remaining three days the rabbi too becomes part of the waiting, and when the seventh morning came they celebrate the holy Sabbath together.¹⁰⁰ The Baal-Shem is the master of the creative, healing word; the way to creation leads through "the nothing", through chaos and despair, through "the form of the in-between".¹⁰¹

Humility, shiflut, the fourth moment, is the recognition of one's own uniqueness as that which is given to one to unfold. As Nachman once said, "God never does the same things twice."¹⁰² It is this appreciation of the individuality of events, even of God's doings, which makes story-telling seem to the Hasids and now to Buber the appropriate form for expressing his activity with regard to man.

The stories the Baal-Shem himself told were not built of scriptural interpretations towering on interpretation but of ordinary anecdotes. There is one tale about his conversion through story-telling of the rabbi of Sharigod. This rabbi's opposition to the Hasidim may have been so strong because:

the heretical things which infuriated him lay like presentiment and seed in his own soul, completely hidden beneath the realm of words, indeed entirely underneath the chamber of the mind in which thought is born.¹⁰³

One morning the Baal-Shem appears in Sharigod and calls to a herdsman on his way to the meadow and begins to tell him a story which pleases his listener so well that he can't

break away. A second man catches a few words in passing; he wants to go on but can't, so he stays and listens. Soon a whole group of people are gathered about the story-teller and still their number grows.

But the narration of the Baal-Shem was not like your narrations, children of the present, which are twisted like a little human destiny or round like a little human thought. Rather the vari-colored magic of the sea was in them and the whole magic of the stars, and, most ineffable of all, the soft wonder of the infinite air. And yet it was no report of distant times and places that the story told; rather, under the touch of its words, the secret melody of each person was awakened, the ruined melody which had been presumed dead, and each received the message of his dispersed life, that it was still there, and was anxious for him. It spoke to each, to him alone, there was no other; he was every-one, he was the tale.¹⁰⁴

In the group is the servant responsible for opening the doors of the House of Prayer. By the time he reaches the door, very late, the rabbi, impatient and furious, asks why he has failed in his duty and why all the others, usually there by this time, have failed to arrive. When the servant tells him of the story-teller, the rabbi storms to the inn and angrily demands of the Baal-Shem, "What do you think you're doing! Keeping people from prayer!" "Rabbi", says the Baal-Shem quietly, "let me tell you a story...." And, of course, this time it is his story. After hearing it and recognizing it, the rabbi addresses the Baal-Shem as "Master" and says, "teach me what I must do to tear the roots of my soul out of the hell in which they find their nourishment." The Baal-Shem answers:

Because, I, a joyful man, have told your story to other joyful men, joy has entered the depths and has torn out the roots.¹⁰⁵

Again and again someone who protests that he wants nothing from the Baal-Shem receives, nevertheless, a story, and when the story has been heard, he says, "I am the man." ¹⁰⁶

Buber, also, in his retelling hopes to hear from his reader this "I am he", to present these stories as images which may take root in us and blossom later when they have become our own. For the Baal-Shem, his dying father's words, spoken to him when he was yet much too young to understand them, became part of his life in this way. The words were words of warning - that in the beginning, at the turning, and at the fulfillment, he would be confronted by the Adversary within and without, "in the shadow of a dream and in living flesh" - and words of reassurance - "your soul is an ore that no one can crush and only God can melt." ¹⁰⁷ This is the beginning of Buber's telling of the legend of the Baal-Shem. The remaining stories are accounts of this prophecy's fulfillment, of the Baal-Shem's encounters with the Adversary and of his deepening understanding of the truth of his father's words. He remembers those words for the first time when he is yet a boy leading the other children to school in order to protect them from a werewolf. The words return with meaning and so with strength-giving power. He finds that evil, the dark heart of the werewolf, has to be touched and thus released from its suffering. The next morning a poor

possessed charcoal burner is found lying dead with great peace on his face. It is like the Grimm fairytale of the princess and the toad in which the princess must touch the toad that lies in bed beside her and, admitting her horror, throw it against the wall before it can be released and transformed into the fairy prince.

In The Legend of the Baal-Shem, Buber has presented not just the stories the master told but the man himself as word, not fairy tales but the legend of a mythic hero whose life is response to a calling and who knows that the word is more than something you take into your mouth. It is rather "as if you entered into the word....The word is an abyss through which the speaker strides." 108 The Baal-Shem lives in a world of word: he is able to understand the language of all creatures; his words come to listeners

in whom an answer slowly awakens and
warms itself by listening. 109

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

In Buber's next book, Daniel, he himself seems to be released, at least for a time, from his service to the Hasidim, for here he appears not as interpreter nor reteller but as liberator of his own images.

One has to find the way to read these unfoldings, to receive them. On reading them nearly fifty years after

they were written they may at first seem very precious, very dated. One almost agrees with Henry Aiken who calls the book "a somewhat windy and foggy period piece, full of romantic atmospheric effects that seem a millenium removed from the contemporary world."¹¹⁰

Daniel is a transitional work - from the lyric to the dramatic, from the natural to the historical, from the epistemological to the ontological, from the subjective to the "transjective"; but before its place in Buber's development can be understood it is necessary to find the way of seeing it as it is itself. One must follow not just the rhythm of the repetitions that link this book with others that precede and follow it, but one must first attend to the rhythms here, in order to note the kinds of links and repetitions which hold the book itself together. This demands that we discover what Buber means by "dialogue" in Daniel. Not only is this book about the dialogical but its form is that of a series of five "dialogues". Although they are called dialogues they are not really dramatic, for they contain no real conflict and reach no climax. As Aiken puts it:

Formally Daniel itself is a series of five rather loosely connected dialogues but it is not only in a philosophical sense that it is a "pre-dialogical" work. The perfunctory questions and remarks of Daniel's interlocutors amount on the whole only to so many punctuation marks in what are actually five prolonged quasi-Nietzschean dithyrambs.....There is to be sure a certain embryonic dialectical development of Daniel's notion of realization, but one never feels it to be the result of a confrontation between Buber's dramatis personae.¹¹¹

Each dialogue is the unfolding of a thought and the discovery of the origin of that thought in an event remembered as image which only now, during the dialogue, comes into expression as thought, as word. Daniel must be read as attentively as poetry, or as a dream. It is an interior drama whose meaning is disclosed not through dramatic confrontations but through the interplay of images.

Perhaps because Daniel is Buber's own word, he does not have to preface his imaginative telling here with a more discursive one as he had done in both Hasidic books. There his introductions had been somewhat like Freud's preface to his Interpretation of Dreams which, David Bakan says, he wrote "after the other parts of the book, evidently as a kind of appeasement of the scientific super-ego." 112 But this book begins not with such an apologetic chapter but more as Dante begins his pilgrimage in The Divine Comedy:

In the middle of the journey of our
life I found myself in a dark wood,
having lost the straight path.

Here, however, the pilgrim has rediscovered the straight path:

After a descent during which I had to
utilize without a halt the late light
of a dying day, I stood on the edge of
a meadow, now sure of the safe way, and
let the twilight come down upon me. 113

Although Buber will later speak of Daniel as a too extravagant word, he feels now sure of his way and of his words. The book presents words as they issue forth out

of an interior dialogue." Daniel (and Buber) ponder the relation of conscious creativity to its unconscious source, of prose to the renewing power of poetry; they see how the poet's creativity is nurtured by the childhood innocence which must be left behind. The book is dialogical in the sense that it presents the word that arises from the conjunction of such polarities.

The image which shows us the way in which we are to understand the dialogues of Daniel is a remembered event, an experience with an oak tree. This experience had already been alluded to in The Legend of the Baal-Shem when Buber wrote of shiflut, of helping out of love, of living with the other

as one bears the life of a tree with all its drinking in and shooting forth and with the dream of its roots and the cravings of its trunk and the thousand journeys of its branches.¹¹⁴

The event to which this metaphor points and the aura of significance surrounding it remain in Buber's memory but not in a fixed form. His understanding of the event changes as do the words that seem to fit it. In the first dialogue of Daniel the woman is told to receive the tree until she feels its bark as her skin and the springing forth of a branch from the trunk as the striving in her muscles, until she is transformed, until it becomes the tree of eternal life.¹¹⁵ When Buber writes in I and Thou:

I consider a tree.....

It can come about, if I have both will and grace that in considering the tree I become bound up in relation to it. The tree is no longer an it. It has been seized by the power of exclusiveness.....The tree is no impression, no play of the imagination, no value depending on my mood; but it is bodied over against me and has to do with me, as I wish it - only in a different way.....I encounter no soul or dryad of the tree, but the tree itself.¹¹⁶

The event of the tree is understood as an example of an I-Thou encounter with nature, which thus lacks the fulfilled mutuality of encounter between man and man, where speech is literally speech, where the other is clearly other and speaks from his otherness. But in the preface to Daniel this event is seen as image, not of a meeting between the self and the other, but of a dialogue within being. The stick which the pilgrim no longer needs to support him, he presses against a tree trunk:

Then I felt in twofold fashion my contact with being: here, where I held the stick, and, there, where it touched the bark. Appearing to be only where I was, I nonetheless found myself there, too, where I found the tree.¹¹⁷

What happens is a "twofold contact with being" and yet it is the self which is found at both poles, at each end of the pilgrim's stick. So that when Buber says, "At that time dialogue appeared to me," we recognize that by dialogue is meant something that takes place within the self, between the poles. He says that the stick is a metaphor for the speech of man, truly directed address which intends the one

unexchangeable other to whom it is sent. Yet when Buber says, "I encompass him to whom I turn", we understand that what had appeared as alien, as otherness, is now brought into the self. It is this conception which shapes these dialogues of self-realization and individuation in which the ego encounters various poles, of the self, and in which each "helps the word of the other". Buber says that "all poetry is dialogue: because all poetry is the shaping of a polarity".¹¹⁸ In the dramatic or fully dialogic situation

the poet flings his burning contradiction into the world, and it stands in flames. The polarity which man experiences in himself wills unity. And unity is not now or ever something which "is there"; unity is that which eternally becomes.¹¹⁹

A more genuinely dramatic understanding will depend on a deeper appreciation of otherness and the realm of the "between".

The first dialogue, the one between Daniel and "the woman", the anima, takes place in the mountains and is about "direction", the balancing of passion, urge, libido, with direction, purpose, ego consciousness, between what Jung would clearly recognize as the feminine and masculine elements within. There is no real opposition between the two personae: he voices what she only senses "as something slumbering, dreaming in me".¹²⁰ She continues his reminiscing of an evening over the sea; then he follows her, "I leaned on the open window in the evening...", with his, "You leaned on the open window in the evening; the small

waves of the sea played against you and you felt the small waves of your blood in unison with them...." . She says, "It is as if the words that you say are leading us into the spaceless", but he replies, "The words that we are saying."¹²¹

If we begin reading with this thought of the masculine and feminine, we are not surprised to hear Daniel begin by voicing his feelings about a body which cannot preserve its steepness, about rocks which tower in the air like an accusation, images which suggest his concern for his own masculinity. He still remembers the image which expressed his deepest longing so absolutely that it was experienced as a happening, his longing to ascend into the spaceless, freed from the "prison of direction-building", freed from the cross-beam, free in the vertical, upright as a cathedral's buttress. "The scaffolding of directions had caved in" as though there were "a kingdom in which there is nothing except my self and over it its completion." ¹²²

Then Daniel reminds the woman that she has had a similar experience (though in hers, appropriately, she was over a shoreless sea so that it lies horizontal below her), a sudden moment of transformation in which "instead of the familiar playing of the waves the heavy flood of the night with the horror of its thousand despairings swelled up toward you, and you, who even now were the mistress, felt yourself lost." Yet the lostness was overcome when "you tore out of the infinity of its directions the one which

was yours and you flung it as a bridge out of the core of your being into the core of the night." 123

Throughout the dialogue we have the unfolding of the relationship between the chaotic and the ordered, the manifold and the one, the sea and the mountains, the earthly and the heavenly, sleep and wakefulness, the mother and the son. Daniel says that the only way to the mother is through the son. To face the unconscious without an ego is disaster, is to let oneself be ravished by the forces of chaos as Dionysus was torn and devoured. What is called for is neither surrender to the unconscious nor holding oneself apart from it, but a setting of "the melody in the abyss" so that "the forces of the deep arrange themselves around it as the 'wild beasts' around the playing Orpheus".¹²⁴ This descent into the unconscious is also pictured as an encounter with the whirlpool or an endless sandstorm. Daniel says that it is indeed necessary to accept the self-defensively perceived in place of the whirlpool, ordered world in which alone one can live with men, but deeper than this is a readiness to meet the naked whirlpool and the power not to be destroyed, to rest in it as in a mother's lap, as the grain of corn rests in the earth.

The woman reaches for Daniel's hand and asks him what he sees. "My hand in yours", and so a horizontal, a crossbeam, but one which he need not break away from for this has been chosen, not compelled. This is the flowering

cross, the claspedness of feminine and masculine.¹²⁵

The second dialogue takes place above the city, the place of busyness, of production, of man's living with man, but above the city where its noise remains only as rustle, almost as song. Daniel's friend Ulrich seems to have very little to say for himself. He voices only the most ordinary, matter-of-fact, common-sense opinions, and never commits himself without reservation:

As much as I agree with you, there seems to me much that is immoderate in what you say..... Why, Daniel? Do you wish to assert that science, which is verified in natural happenings and in purposeful acts, is not built throughout on reality? But what do you think about the common usage of speech?¹²⁶

What is said between these two, between Daniel and what Jung would call the persona or public mask, as they talk above the city, must nevertheless be related to the "common usage", to the time when "we have returned into the enclosure of the city".¹²⁷

Again Daniel wants to share with his friend a particular event, one which happened long ago but "only much later was it revealed to me what I had known in that moment".¹²⁸ It was a moment in which he had received the noise and rush of the crowd (as Daniel had told the woman to receive the tree) so that his soul became their song. Then suddenly he experienced not melody but chaos, the galloping, purpose-mad forces of the crowd within him,

and when this ebbed an aloneness worse than ever before. This almost forgotten memory has now ripened into a fully developed thought, into Daniel's distinction between "orientation" and "realization". This distinction is very like one which Jung makes in an essay on "Two Kinds of Thinking", published just a year earlier than Daniel, between reality and fantasy thinking,¹²⁹ except that Buber's choice of the word "realizing" where Jung uses "fantasy" suggests that Buber has already begun to move away from that celebration of the imagination in which he has until now participated.¹³⁰ Here Daniel tells Ulrich: "There is a twofold relation of man to his experience: the orienting or classifying and the realizing or making real."

What you experience.....you can register in the structure of experience for the sake of your own aims or you can grasp it for its own sake in its own power and splendor..... It no more occupied a space than the new heaven which John saw at Patmos; but you can make it into a thing in space.....You can make it into an event in time, expand it into a sequence, as a boy violently spreads out a rosebud.....It was no more causal than the majesty of the first dream; you force it into a chain where it represents just as much meaning as every other link.¹³¹

I and Thou begins: To man the world is twofold, in accordance with his twofold attitude,¹³² Buber speaks there of man's two primary "words", I-It and I-Thou. Here in Daniel, also, language is the metaphor for the two ways of relating: ordinary language, "common usage", and poetry. Daniel asks Ulrich, "Has it not often struck you that in a poem,

Hölderlin's perhaps, a word is employed in a heightened meaning that the common usage does not know?" ¹³³ Poetry represents the moments of heightened meaning which renew speech. As Daniel pictures the imaginative remembering of the realizing man, his speaking is itself densely metaphorical, poetic in his sense, and in style altogether different from the expanded images of the retold tales or the simpler indicative tone of Buber's later writings. The creating man is one in whom what is common to all men fulfills itself; in him it is so concentrated into word that it creates reality for all. The realizing power is strong in the child and the primitive but only because the orienting power hasn't matured. In the poet, orienting is included but made subserviant, as Ulrich is included in this dialogue, as the city and what it represents, "the deceptive game of unholy haste", "the distorted aims", "the illusory structure of information and false security", are precisely what is to be made "real". ¹³⁴

The third dialogue includes Daniel and another friend, Reinold, who comes in the morning so that they may converse in the face of the awakening garden. The garden setting recalls that garden in the morning of the world in which innocence was first lost and man came to a knowledge of good and evil. This friend comes as one who wants to talk to Daniel of his happy childhood and his present lostness. He seems to be the image of the child within, lost because left behind, like the child of Buber's grandfather's house who was lost for a time and then had to be found again before Buber could liberate himself

from Olam-ha-tohu. He says he has not come before in the morning (is this a memory that comes usually only at night?). He has waited all this time for a word of recognition from Daniel ("You praise me for the first time. I have often thought of how it would be if you praised me once, and now I should be glad of it");¹³⁵ and must now be allowed to present himself, to tell his story. Daniel understands this need to find the other to whom one can speak, since meaning happens, re-occurs, only through mutuality, sharing, only in dialogue. As soon as he begins to talk, a childhood memory of his mother returns to Reinold and he speaks of his childhood when nothing meaningless had ever happened to him. "When I awakened out of the music of my dreams into the dark, the night had my mother's arms and even motherly words like hers." ¹³⁶ But then one night when he was already well into his twenties, he experienced chaos and the abyss between piece and piece of the world, like Rabbi Naptha in The Legend of the Baal-Shem. So he comes in need and asks, "What should I do?" And Daniel tells him that there is no way back; but that this world where meaning isn't given is God's world:

This is the kingdom of God, Reinold:
the kingdom of danger and risk, of
eternal beginning and eternal becoming,
of opened spirit and of deepened realization,
the kingdom of holy insecurity.¹³⁷

His original security had been the sleepwalking of a child, but at the moment of awakening he was given the choice between realizing and orienting. "Meaning appeared to you to be burst.....because it wanted to renew itself. In the

dreaming heart a daring heart was enclosed." 138 Reinhold must win his peace anew and as an awakened one.

The fourth dialogue occurs between Daniel and Leonard, who have both just come from the theatre and yet as Leonard remarks, "It feels as if we did not come the same way." 139 Daniel admits how unaware he had been of the other's presence.¹⁴⁰ The dialogue is entitled "On Polarity".

Daniel says that it is as though he had been in the theatre for the first time, for he has experienced it as sacred happening as originally drama was experienced at Eleusis long ago. The play seemed to take place in "a space lifted out of the context of space" and out of time, as though "before and after had been emptied in order to fill this bulging vessel, the moment".¹⁴¹ He says that he experienced the play not as spectator but as a secret hierophant and yet there is so much of the play that Daniel seems not to have "received" at all, so caught up has he been in his own revery, his experiencing. He even speaks of the third act of my drama; what is happening within him, not on the stage, is clearly the central drama here. What the evening in the theatre reveals to him is polarity, the primal duality of being and non-being which outside the theatre is always veiled by mediacy. What stood in the center between the poles was "not something mediating but the I of the spirit whose primal secret duality they revealed".¹⁴²

Reality is antiphonal like Creon and Antigone whose being and meaning, whose destiny, is precisely their over-against-one-anotherness.

Then Daniel becomes aware of another polarity, not that represented within the play but that between the audience and the action of the agon, the polarity which Brecht stresses and which he fears both realism and sentimentalism destroy.¹⁴³ In each act Daniel becomes aware of a new polarity. In the third act it is that between the actors and their roles, the polarity which Pirandello's six characters exploit. How does the actor represent a hero? Not by imitation but through transformation; through realization; not through collecting mien and voice and gesture and assembling them. He does not experience the feelings he enacts but experiences his action, as Boleslavsky would advise him to.¹⁴⁴ Here Buber is not speaking of an empathy which eliminates the tension but of enacting the polarity itself so that it is the actor's action which relates the self and the role. Then Daniel considers the polarity between the written play, the poet's play, and the performed play; and finally the duality in the becoming of the poem itself (and this last is thought of no longer in the theatre but in the garden outside where Daniel walks alone) which includes both creation and destruction, choice and rejection for the sake of that which is chosen. The work of the poet is a fruitful suffering of anitheses. He speaks the world,

builds the rainbow bridge from pole to pole. "Thus the poet is the messenger of God and of the earth and is at home in the two spheres".¹⁴⁵ Certainly Daniel itself is written to be such poetry, a speaking of the world. Daniel is the ripened expression of the encounter with the tree, as the two Hasidic books arise as response to the childhood memory of the zaddik.

The last dialogue takes place by the sea and is a conversation with Lukas about death, the death of a friend the year before, and yet not of a friend, not of someone one could be close to, but of someone who appeared to others as completed, ripened, transformed. This dialogue is really a musing questioning by the still living Lukas of the meaning of Elias' death, a death which he still relives morning after morning. Lukas has discovered that life and death are no longer boundaries but are in each other; he finds destroying and shaping to be the present inner expression of death and life and wants to know how he himself can be the unity of these two. Daniel's answer is like the Baal-Shem's "Let me tell you a story": "Let me tell you of an event", he says, "of the death of someone I had loved". When he has spoken of this, he concludes, "For despair, Lukas, is the highest of God's messengers; it trains us into spirits that can create and decide." ¹⁴⁶ Each has his own way of bridging the tension, of being a bridge,

and like Siddhartha in Hesse's tale has to find this way through taking the other ways and at last coming upon his own:

Each of the ways that the wisdom of the ages takes and that the seeker follows has become a wrong way for him; he must forsake each because he knows that to follow them he would have to forsake himself, the mystery of his life experience.....Yet each of the wrong ways ripened a layer of teaching in him to conscious being.....And so he wanders from way to way until in a later hour he comes upon the simple path of his self which is ready for him.¹⁴⁷

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34. Yiddish Stories, p. 613.
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Chapter Three

At The Turning.

A conversion:

What happened was no more than that one forenoon, after a morning of "religious" enthusiasm, I had a visit from an unknown young man, without being there in spirit. I certainly did not fail to let the meeting be friendly, I did not treat him any more remissly than all of his contemporaries who were in the habit of seeking me out about this time of day as an oracle that is ready to listen to reason. I conversed attentively and openly with him - only I omitted to guess the questions which he did not put. Later, not long after, I learned from one of his friends - he himself was no longer alive - the essential content of these questions; I learned that he had come to me not casually, but borne by destiny, not for a chat but a decision. He had come to me, he had come in this hour. What do we expect when we are in despair and yet go to a man? Surely a presence by means of which we are told that nevertheless there is meaning.

Since then I have given up the "religious" which is nothing but the exception, extraction, exaltation, ecstasy; or it has given me up. I possess nothing but the everyday out of which I am never taken.¹

That last dialogue in Daniel ends with Daniel's saying to Lukas:

We spoke of death, my friend, Lukas; we have all the time spoken of nothing else. You wish to know the holy sea, the unity that bears life and death in right and left hand. You cannot know it otherwise than when you take upon yourself the tension of life and death and live through the life and death of the world as your life and death.²

A year later death came to the world in the war which marked the collapse of the nineteenth century order. Even from the point of view of a professional historian writing in our day this was the moment of umkehr, of reversal:

From the distance of fifty years it is more obvious than ever that the First World War - far more than the Second - was the great turning-point of modern history.....(It brought) into relief the hidden and unresolved tensions which had been gathering strength ever since the closing years of the nineteenth century.....The short-term results were the stricken human wreckage spread over the fields of Flanders or the Priapet marshes; the long-term results were a world from which the sense of living within an established order, which had characterized the nineteenth century, even at its worst, has been obliterated.³

Eric Voegelin speaks of Israel's transforming the pragmatic event of the flight from Egypt into "a drama of the soul";⁴ Buber and many of his contemporaries seem to have experienced this outward event as an inner one, as just such a drama of the soul, as a death of the world lived through as a personal death, as silencing. Thomas Mann writes that

"the four years of war paralyzed my creative activities and drove me to a painful and exhaustive revision of all my spiritual fundamentals." ⁵ Rainer Maria Rilke said:

The present time with all its hindrances and its activity gone to the most frightful ruin, is like lead poured around me -, I cannot move, not outwardly and not far inwardly. And should there still be some life in my inmost being, I am too blunt and untransparent to feel and recognize myself in it.... ⁶

Oswald Spengler, too, had seen this war (even before it began) as a moment of historical change of phase, as the inevitable outward manifestation of the historical crisis, and as a time when all the scattered, disconnected questionings of the years before were suddenly visibly all aimed in the same direction:

The tasks before men were not, as supposed, infinitely numerous - they were one and the same task. Everyone had an inkling that this was so, but no one from his own narrow standpoint had seen the single and comprehensive solution. And yet it had been in the air since Nietzsche, and Nietzsche himself had gripped all the decisive problems although, being a romantic, he had not dared to look strict reality in the face.⁷

Spengler has spoken of the question, the great question of an epoch, as its life-symbol,⁸ so that for him this converging of questions into the question marked the birth-time of a new symbol. It is a moment of rebirth as well as of death. It was the war and his attempt "to comprehend it from an examination of the spirit of the preceding centuries",⁹ an attempt which later appeared to him as "an almost accidental

occasion of beginning", that brought him

to see the solution clearly before me in immense outlines, possessed of full inward necessity, a solution derived from one single principle that though discoverable had never been discovered, that from my youth had haunted and attracted me, tormenting me with the sense that it was there and must be attacked and yet defying me to seize it.¹⁰

How much this sounds like Buber's description of the writing of I and Thou:

When I drafted the first section of this book I was impelled by an inward necessity. A vision which had come to me again and again since my youth, and which had been clouded over again and again, had now reached steady clarity. This clarity was so manifestly supra-personal in its nature that I at once knew I had to bear witness to it.¹¹

Spengler's "solution", the question which he describes the world war as bringing into view, is the opposition between history and nature, between happening and tangible event, becoming and thing become. Buber's "vision" and Rosenzweig's and Ebner's¹² sprang from a recognition of this same anti-thesis. It is as though in this war history has forced herself upon them so that they must at last recognize her and pay homage. Clio, too, is a muse. It is still difficult to realize that each of these three had come by a different way, his own way, that they had not been "in touch" with one another while the books which burst from them at the end of the war were being prepared.¹³ Yet to know this helps one to see how much of the meaning of these epochal books is lost if we focus only on their saying-the-same-thing aspect.

and on their contemporaneity, if we don't also regard them as words spoken on a way, related to a personal past and future.

The world-historical events influenced what these men had to say, not in the mechanistic sense that a differently shaped situation demands that one remold one's message to "fit", but rather in the sense that the speaker himself was transformed: he and his world had changed together. Buber experienced the death of the old world as a death of the old self. It wasn't just the collective idols and ideologies which had lost their power, not only the culture's "big words" but also what Buber now saw as the too easy words of his own Daniel. Shedding the old body meant casting off old ways of seeing and saying, though there comes with time the recognition again that the "wrong way" had been the way to "the simple path of the self waiting for him", that the unification of self seen as goal in Daniel is a necessary preliminary step.

For Buber the war was a time of a "famine of the word", a time in which he could neither write nor read.¹⁴ Later, looking back, he could also see it as a time of turning, a time of suspension at the point of turning, while "a layer of teaching ripened in him to conscious being." It was as though he moved through this confrontation with death from Hamlet's "readiness" to the "ripeness" acquired on the heath:

Men must endure
 Their going hence, even as their coming hither:
 Ripeness is all.¹⁵

Hans Kohn calls this period in Buber's life "die Sammlung", the gathering.

For, of course, "the war" for Buber meant not just newspaper accounts of what was happening "there", it meant what happened "here", the way it was brought home to him, the personal event which crystallized it for him. "It was the late autumn of 1914 and he died in the war.....",¹⁶ that unknown young man who came to Buber one forenoon. It was this encounter which later came to be seen as the moment of turning from melody to word, from intensity to direction, from ecstasy to everyday. This event taught Buber that

God's speech to men penetrates what happens in the life of each one of us, and all that happens in the world around us, biographical and historical, and makes it for you and me into instruction, message, demand.¹⁷

The event becomes image, becomes paradigm, because the other happenings and responses of this time cluster around it. It is this event become word which is presented in I and Thou.

When the way opens for Rilke again after the war the turning is just the mystery: suddenly one is outside. As he writes in a letter to Merline:

Unless one assigns to the act of victory a mysterious and far deeper meaning, it is not for us to consider ourselves the tamers of our internal lions. But suddenly we feel ourselves walking beside them, as in a Triumph,

without being able to remember the exact moment when this inconceivable reconciliation took place.¹⁸

But for Buber the meeting with the young man is lived with as symbol for that moment and increasingly the moment of turning becomes the central event, the event which places one in relation to the center; it is tsuvah, the return to God.

The movement from this event to the completed writing of I and Thou is the movement, to use Erich Voegelin's terms, from the compact to the differentiated. I and Thou is the unpacking of the metaphor, the bringing of the event into the world of word and thereby transforming and "realizing" it, so that the meeting which, after all, didn't happen then may be brought to happening now. The meaning is never divorced from the sign but the presence of the sign, of this event, in the writings is at first a concealed one. Auden says

Some poems are directly about the sacred beings they were written for; others are not, and in that case no reader can tell what was the original encounter which provided the impulse for the poem.¹⁹

Yet in Buber's work there are sometimes clues in the imagery which point to the memory's effective presence. For example, Buber's description in an essay as Hasidism of Moses descending from the mountain to the people, disengaging himself from the upper worlds and turning himself to the people, listening

to all its small cares,²⁰ is impressed with the seal of the remembered experience.

Auden also says that "with advancing age" sacred happenings tend to gain in importance over sacred things.²¹ So with Buber it is no longer tree and stone, the oak and mica of Daniel, the mystic's hierophanies, that are at "the center of the world", for now he has experienced what Mircea Eliade calls "the terror of history".²² Until it was terrifying it had conveyed no numinosity. History presents the realm of the interpersonal as the realm of meaning; for Buber it is now a with-another-person event that has become image of the meaningful. "Image of God" now means not any numinous object which serves as a pointer to transcendent reality, but primarily the living image of God in man which man is to "realize" by "following the attributes".²³ The way to God is still through man but now through the other man not the self, or rather through man-with-man.²⁴ Obviously such a changed understanding of image is at the same time an overturning of Buber's conception of image-making, of his own work as writer.

So the relation between silence and image and word is understood in a new way. In Cheruth, written in 1918, speech is no longer "about" an unspeakable mystery but is the "bearer of the creative dialogue between man and God".²⁵ The new focus on the importance of word and language is also reflected in a 1918 letter on "the essence of language":

Word-creation, the production of words, is for me one of the most mysterious processes of the spiritual life. I can see no real difference between what I here call the production of words and the coming forward of Logos. Speech is the expression and parable of all spiritual creating.²⁶

"The world of word" is one in which one is always speaking to a particular actual other and where one doesn't know beforehand what the other will say. Franz Rosenzweig says that the ground word is "and"; I and the other.²⁷ The one-ness created by such an "and" is a metaphorical or dramatic one-ness different from the "poetic" or "imagistic" in which the tensions are dissolved or reconciled, in which all becomes me.

The task is no longer "to forge the conscience of my race in the smithy of my soul", as Stephen Daedalus thought;²⁸ now we are back in Dublin on Mabbot Street, scene of the failed encounter between Stephen and Bloom. Unlike the experience of stone and tree, here it is the relation that is not established, like Hosea's marriage to Gomer, the abyss between persons that is not overcome, that leads to insight, to the recognition of the overwhelming significance of conversation with the other. This failure, however, experienced as bearing within it not just judgment but also knowledge and a call. The writing that springs from this is not a solution, is not utilitarian, but is a ritualistic living with the tension.

Much earlier in his life Buber had experienced another such unfulfilled encounter. The first of the autobiographical recollections included in Begegnung stems from Buber's fourth year, the year after his parent's divorce. He remembers his waiting to see his mother again though he allowed no question to cross his lips. Then one day a neighbor's daughter tells him, "No, she will never come back". This knowledge penetrates more and more deeply. Buber says that within ten years he began to experience this desertion as something happening not only to himself, but to man. He made up the word "vergegnung" to describe such happenings, to express the failure of a real encounter. So the experiencing of unfulfilled relationship led to a word-creation even then. He finishes, "I imagine all that I experienced later of genuine encounter springs from this hour." 29

The separation from the mother becomes once again the symbol of the primal abyss but the dream is no longer of a return to the womb, to the original unity. It is the separation, the failure, that is discovered to be the basis of encounter: distance and relation.³⁰ In I and Thou Buber speaks of exchanging a spiritual relation for the natural connection to the world that the separation from the mother broke.³¹ In an essay on Judaism he writes that the living core of Jewish belief is to know distance and presence as one inseparable truth, to know that

God is wholly raised above man.....beyond the grasp of man, and yet.....present in an immediate relationship with these human beings who are absolutely incommensurable with him, and that he faces them.³²

In Beyond the Pleasure Principle, his first after-the-war book, Freud also seems to recognize the way of separation as the human way. There is no heaven, no world corresponding to the pleasure principle; there is only death and the long way to it, the way of reality, the way forced upon us by our discovery of the other. In theology, too, for example, in Barth, we see at this time a new emphasis on otherness, on God as the Wholly Other. Barth stresses the unbridgeable gulf between God and man, faith and culture, while Buber (who already regards this as a characteristically Jewish insistence) believes there is initiative on the human side as well, that there is a creative element in man's response.

The visit with the young man is for Buber what Freud would call a traumatic event, one which remains just because it was not lived out, because it failed. It remains in "the past" as still living, still gathering other "affects" about it. Because it is the imaginative memory rather than neurotic repression which weaves together past and present, the past is, however, brought into the present with renewing power, as in Proust, rather than as a compulsive patterning. It is brought out of the private world into the interpersonal world, not through psychoanalytic transference but through

artistic creation. Later, particularly as he turns to the Bible, Buber will speak of the necessity for a personal renewal of collective traditional symbols. Now it is the personal image which must be thrown (ballein) to the other for only then does it become a symbol (syn-ballein). That this is an event which is still to be completed means for Buber that it is to be fulfilled through speaking of it to another. And, of course, it is precisely being able to speak to another than has been put in question.

The event has become for Buber, theophany, a meeting with God that occurs within and as the blundered meeting with the dead youth. This seems to Buber a thoroughly Jewish understanding of revelation. In an essay on "The Faith of Judaism" he says that for the Jew revelation includes the failure of response:

Revelation is nothing else than the relation between giving and receiving, which means that it is also the relation between desiring to give and failing to receive.³³

The Jew doesn't have to identify revelation and redemption; he experiences the contradiction of the world as theophany.³⁴ In an essay on Hasidism, he writes:

It would be contrary to the faith and humour of our existence (Hasidism is both faithful and humorous) to suppose that there is a level of being into which we only need to lift ourselves to get "behind" the problematic. The absurd is given to me that I may endure and sustain it with my life; this, the enduring and sustaining of the absurd, is the meaning which I can experience.³⁵

Surely there is no more "escape" from the absurd here than in Camus? One could even say that Camus's longing for Cartesian clarity makes him rebel at the abyss, or wish it were not there. For him meaning would still be "explanation"; for Buber it is "love". The Jew "hurled into the abyss of the world" is the Jew "in exile".³⁶ Buber seems to approach here the "theology of exile" which Arthur Cohen calls for,³⁷ the "theology of the profane" which Thomas Altizer attempts.³⁸ As Auden's Caliban tells us: It is just here among the ruins and the bones, that we may rejoice in the perfected work which is not ours.³⁹

We should note that Buber's meditation on this event leads him first toward a renewed asking about the meaning of Jewish existence. The way to an understanding of what it means to be a man still leads for Buber through an understanding of what it is to be a Jew. The focus is not, as in the earlier essays, on the individual Jew as a paradigm for the human individual but rather on Israel as a model for the human community. "The Jew" still meets Buber as a "figure" but now as a figure in history; the social and historical dimensions are here taken seriously. It is as though Buber had said: This world, the historical together-with-others, world, is the place of encounter with reality; I have just learned this, tragically, here, and now I discover that it could have been known all along, that it is what our very existence as Jews points to. When the world goes, God goes with it. In a later essay on the beginnings of Hasidism,

Buber writes:

The soul imagines that the world had disappeared from between it and God, but with the world, God himself has disappeared; only it, alone, the soul, is there. What it calls God

(What he had once called God)

is only an image within it; what it conducts as dialogue

(As he had once done in Daniel)

is a monologue with divided roles."⁴⁰

When during this period Buber again becomes active in the Zionist movement, it is with much greater interest in the historical and political dimensions than before. Now Zion is called to be truly "community", a "we" grounded in a common "Thou",⁴¹ and not just another political nationality.

In 1918 Buber seeks to go back and trace his way, a way which he believes can be understood as his "way to Hasidism".⁴² He believes that Hasidism had meant to him from the beginning "to love the world in God".⁴³ "I early had a premonition, indeed, no matter how I resisted it, that I was inescapably destined to love the world."⁴⁴ Hasidism is seen as a community which "sought to erect man's life together on the foundation of divine truth."⁴⁵ It had taught him that "one must serve God with one's whole life, with the whole of the everyday,"⁴⁶ and presented him with an image of genuine community and genuine leadership:

When I saw the rebbe striding through the rows of the waiting, I felt "leader", and when I saw the hasidim dance with the Torah, I felt "community".⁴⁷

The Hasidic zaddik is a leader who "withstands the thousand-fold questioning glance of individual lives, who gives true answer to the trembling mouth of the needy creature who time after time demands from (him) true decision".⁴⁸ His is the whole, united soul which can lay "hold of the dispersed soul, agitating it on all sides, and demanding the event of crystallization; he is the true helper".⁴⁹

Obviously this is the role into which Buber felt he had been cast and which he had not fulfilled: "he speaks - and knows that his speech is destiny".⁵⁰ Yet Buber has spoken of other events in which "I who am truly no zaddik... ..caught sight in my inner experience of the zaddik's function as a leader." ⁵¹ In Begegnung he writes of being asked, also in 1914, hesitatingly and most seriously by an old man, "Do you believe in God?" He was asked and could not answer until suddenly there came to him these words: "If to believe in God means to be able to speak of him in the third person, I do not believe in God. If to believe in him means to be able to speak to him, I believe in God." ⁵²

Buber was not a zaddik, yet Kohn speaks of his words during this time as being a gathering-point for the younger Zionists,⁵³ so evidently other's dreams also could cluster around this experience of him. Perhaps this is what it is

to have a "Big Dream", one that is meant for the tribe and not only for oneself, what Buber meant by calling it "manifestly suprapersonal". But by 1921 Buber once more withdrew from active Zionism. He was ready again to speak about man as such and not only about Judaism, to speak to man as simply the one before him and not as Jew.

In so much of this prelusory writing there is already talk of "I and Thou", like an echo heard before the cry. For example, in one of the essays on Hasidism which date from this period, Buber writes:

(This teaching) is wholly based on the double-directional relation of the human I and the divine Thou, on the reality of reciprocity, on the meeting.⁵⁴

To be sure, these words had been used before by others, by Hamann and Jacobi and Feuerbach, (as Buber himself relates in his "Nachwort" to the collection of his writings about dialogue⁵⁵) and he had "known" them from long before. But it is only now that they became his words, the words which embodied his vision. It is this which we wish to follow here.

Notes for Chapter Three:

1. Between Man and Man, p. 13, 14.
2. Daniel, p. 144.
3. Barraclough, Geoffrey, "Goodbye to All That", in New York Review of Books, Vol. II, No. 7, p. 7.
4. Voegelin, Erich, Israel and Revelation, Louisiana State University Press, 1958, p. 113.
5. Mann, Thomas, Stories of Three Decades, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1951, p. viii.
6. Rilke, Rainer Maria, Selected Letters of, Doubleday & Co., Inc., New York, 1960, p. 198.
7. Spengler, Oswald, The Decline of the West, (an abridged edition), Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1962, p. 36, 37, 38.
8. Ibid., p. 31.
9. Ibid., p. 36.
10. Ibid., p. 39.
11. I and Thou, p. 123.
12. Franz Rosenzweig's Star of Redemption completed in 1919; there is no English translation but some selections in Blatzer, Nahum, Franz Rosenzweig, Schocken Books, New York, 1961. (German edition: Der Stern der Erlösung, Lambert Schneider, Heidelberg, 1954. Ebner, Ferdinand. Das Wort und die Geistigen Realitäten, Verlag Herder, Vienna, 1952. (First published 1921.)
13. Buber, Martin, "Zur Geschichte des dialogischen Prinzips" in Werke, Vol. 1, Verlag Lambert Schneider, Heidelberg, 1962, p. 296.
14. Ibid., p. 298.
15. King Lear, Act V, Scene II, 9-11.
16. From an excerpt of a letter from Buber to Maurice Friedman quoted in Friedman, op. cit., p. 50.
17. I and Thou, p. 136.

18. Rilke, Selected Letters, p. 252.
19. Auden, op. cit., p. 59.
20. Buber, Martin, The Origin and Meaning of Hasidism, Horizon Press, New York, 1960, p. 140.
21. Auden, op. cit., p. 56.
22. Eliade, Mircea, Cosmos and History, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1959, p. 141 ff.
23. Israel and the World, p. 73.
24. Kohn, op. cit., p. 186.
25. Ibid., p. 151.
26. Ibid., p. 240.
27. Glatzer, op. cit., p. 205.
28. Joyce, James, op. cit., p. 525.
29. Begegnung, p. 5, 6.
30. Cf. title of 1950 essay "Urdistanz und Beziehung" included in Werke, Vol. 1, p. 411-424.
31. I and Thou, p. 25.
32. Israel and the World, p. 30.
33. Ibid., p. 27.
34. Ibid., p. 26.
35. Origin, p. 179.
36. Israel and the World, p. 167.
37. Cohen, op. cit., passim but esp. "Epilogue".
38. Altizer, Thomas J. J., Mircea Eliade and The Dialectic of the Sacred, esp. ch. 8.
39. Auden, W. H., "The Sea and the Mirror", in The Collected Poetry of, Random House, New York, 1945, p. 402.
40. Origin, p. 95.

41. Kohn, op. cit., p. 186.
42. "My Way to Hasidism" in Modern Man, p. 47-73.
43. Modern Man, p. 179.
44. Origin, p. 99.
45. Modern Man, p. 148.
46. Origin, p. 50.
47. Modern Man, p. 53.
48. Ibid., p. 68.
49. Origin, p. 143.
50. Ibid., loc. cit.
51. Modern Man, p. 67.
52. Begegnung, p. 35.
53. Kohn, op. cit., p. 168.
54. Origin, p. 122.
55. Werke, Vol. 1, p. 293 ff.

Chapter Four

Word and Event.

A meeting:

"Siddhartha," he said, "we are now old men. We may never see each other again in this life. I can see, my dear friend, that you have found peace. I realize that I have not found it. Tell me one more word, my esteemed friend, tell me something I can conceive, something I can understand! Give me something to help me on my way. My path is often hard and dark."

Siddhartha was silent and looked at him with his calm, peaceful smile

Govinda bowed low.....right down to the ground, in front of the man sitting there motionless, whose smile reminded him of everything that he had ever loved in his life, of everything that had ever been of value and holy in his life.¹

Now it happens, now it comes to word. The vision which Buber had had since youth but which had been clouded over now comes to "steady clarity". This vision, like the one of the "perfected man" earlier, bears within it a summons to proclaim it to the world, and so to be "translated" into word as well as "into the reality of life".² "Some time after, I received the right word as well",³ as in the encounter with the old man who had asked about his belief in God. There is an "arising of word",⁴ a movement from vision to word, yet both are "received". In a "postscript" to I and Thou written in 1957 which might have been called "My Way to 'I and Thou'", Buber writes of the artist confronted with that which has not yet entered the world but is ready to do so, and to become present to us. When one has to do with a "structure of the spirit" which is not yet "in the world", not yet "to hand", when one is at the limit of what one already knows how to say -

so each new venture
is a new beginning, a raid on the inarticulate⁵

"then all (one) can do is to indicate indirectly certain events in man's life which can scarcely be described.....and in the end.....to appeal to the witness of your own mysteries - buried, perhaps, but still attainable."⁶ Then you seek to do as the Baal-Shem did: to tell the story so as to awaken the other to his own story.

In I and Thou Buber says that there are three spheres in which the world of relation arises: our life with nature, with men and with "geistige Wesenheiten".⁷ Ronald Gregor Smith first translated this last as the relation with "intelligible forms" and then in the second edition of his translation substituted the phrase "spiritual beings".⁸ Buber is trying in this phrase to speak of the artist's relation to the forms which confront him and desire "to be made through him into a work".⁹ In this sphere of relationship "we perceive no Thou, but none the less we feel that we are addressed and we answer - forming, thinking, acting"; this relation "does not use speech but begets it".¹⁰ It is the source of art, of what Buber will later call man's "image-work", of the world of culture.

When in I and Thou Buber elaborates on the relation between the artist and the form which steps up to him and demands effective power we can understand this as an explication of knowledge won from his own way to this work, this speaking of the primary word:

This form is no offspring of his soul, but is an appearance which steps up to it and demands of it the effective power. The man is concerned with an act of his being. If he carries it through, if he speaks the primary word out of his being to the form which appears, then the effective power streams out, and the word arises.¹¹

Buber again speaks of form in contrast to fantasy's play with possibility. Art means sacrifice; the endless possibility "is offered up on the altar of the form". "Everything

which just this moment ran in play through the perspective must be obliterated; nothing of that may penetrate the work".¹² The artist neither experiences nor describes the form which meets but bodies it forth. The form is not an image of his fancy but "that which exists in the present".¹³ Buber says that to shape is to discover, to body forth is to disclose; the way to meaning lies through forming. Buber recognizes that the work produced becomes a thing among things in the world of It, but "from time to time it can face the receptive beholder in its whole embodied form".¹⁴

As we look at I and Thou we shall attempt to see it as such a bodying forth and as an appeal to the reader's own mysteries. I and Thou is a response to a vision of living as meeting, life as encounter, which came to Buber through the unfulfilled meeting with the young man. It is a word which seeks to establish a relation with the receptive beholder. It is a speaking of the primary word to the form which appeared, and to us whom the work confronts. Therefore much that Buber says in the book about the relationship between I and a Thou, about the word that passes between the self and the other, will help us to understand the word speaking that the book itself is. Form and meaning, the artist's shaping and the form which faced him, are here deeply intertwined. I and Thou is still self-consciously poetical. We could still speak of a musical patterning, although we are now presented with an ordering of words and

phrases rather than of images. We will discover a correlation of vocabulary and of verbal rhythms, of the way sentences and paragraphs are built, to what is being said; for example, the shift in Part Two to the world of It is marked by a noticeable shift in the style of writing. Meaningful relationships are indicated by verbal association, through repetitions and verbal parallels, rather than by propositional identifications. I and Thou is not spoken from the silence in one man to the silence in another. It is spoken within the shared world of word, but out of a deep recognition that objective speech can snatch "only at a fringe" of what Buber seeks to point us to.¹⁵

So what is the form of I and Thou, of this "right word"? It is different from any other work of Buber's either earlier or later. Perhaps for many it is the most difficult to receive, because so compact and compressed, particularly in its beginning. It has neither the leisureliness of the earlier story-telling nor the relaxed quality of the later elaborations. It is not a commentary on someone else's writings nor a retelling of another's story. Nor is it a dialogue with the self, a playing amongst the persons of one's own interior drama. Here is simply a word from one to another, from the actual person to the actual (though unknown) particular other who finds himself addressed. Since the purpose lies in what happens between them through the word which this book is, names do not matter. I and Thou hold all that matters. This time there is no "prose" to introduce the

"poetry", but a leap into a beginning which eludes such "naming"; a series of direct, almost apodictic statements in a third-person form which conveys the sense of "supra-personal clarity":

To man the world is twofold, in accordance with his twofold attitude.

The attitude of man is twofold, in accordance with the twofold nature of the primary words which he speaks.

The primary words are not isolated words, but combined words.

The one primary word is the combination I-Thou.

The other primary word is the combination I-it; where in, without a change in the primary word, one of the words He and She can replace It.

Hence the I of man is also twofold.

For the I of the primary word I-Thou is a different I from that of the primary word I-It.¹⁶

This mode of speaking recalls the "darkly luminous" utterances of Heraclitus which "do not simply speak nor yet simply conceal" but "give signs":¹⁷

The way up and the way down are one and the same.
In the circle the beginning and the end are common.
Into the same rivers we step and do not step.¹⁸

In both we sense the presence of an original speaking, of words that arise out of a primal speaking, out of the Logos. Yet in Heraclitus the writing remains fragmentary and elusive; in Buber this compressed opening is a prelude to a development and clarification of the vision. In both we discover a recognition of the oppositions inherent in life; but to Heraclitus this means paradox, whereas in Buber it is

understood as a rhythmic twofoldedness.

"The primary word I-Thou" can only be spoken with the whole being;¹⁹ but the "form" of the address is irrelevant. This opening shows that one does not have to say Thou to intend Thou. "When a primary word is spoken the speaker enters the word and takes his stand in it",²⁰ as Buber seems to be doing here with these words which seem to already be there within a speaking.

Here there is no "story-line" and no line of logical argument; the book is held together by a different form of association, one which expresses Buber's understanding of how the moments of encounter with the Thou are related to one another. "The relation to the Thou is direct. No system of ideas, no fore-knowledge, and no fancy intervene between I and Thou." ²¹ Here images and events are not "in order" but within one another,²² and it is this interpenetration which creates the form of the book. Words, phrases, sentences, stanzas, form wholes and then reassemble "taking on a continually new appearance" ²³ like the Heraclitean fire which "throws apart and then brings together again, advances and retires".²⁴ They belong together but the relations between them are not yet hardened and rigidified; they are still capable of forming new relations, creating new patterns. The progression of the book is like the interweaving of motifs in his own life, in any life. This kind of repetition gives I and Thou the same kind of unity which Buber later

finds in the Bible where Abraham's "Here I am" and Isaiah's "Here I am; send me" despite and because of the differences, mutually illuminate one another as do Moses' and Jeremiah's hesitations.

There are repetitions of images and phrases and whole paragraphs. In "Part One" Buber says, "But objective speech snatches only at the fringe of real life", and then he immediately turns to analogy: "The It is the eternal chrysalis, the Thou the eternal butterfly".²⁵ This analogy is re-called when in "Part Three" he writes: "Every isolated Thou is bound to enter the chrysalis state of the It in order to take wings anew."²⁶ More importantly, phrases such as "In the beginning is relation", "Through the Thou a man becomes I", "To man the world is twofold in accordance with his twofold attitude", reappear again and again. The page-long description of the three spheres of relation in "Part One" is almost duplicated in "Part Three".

There are repetitions of themes and images from the earlier works. The old experiences are included in I and Thou, "made new" as by the poetic imagination so that now in being recollected they are enabled, as Wordsworth expressed it, "to re-act upon the mind which hath performed the process like a new existence." The contemplation of the emotion associated with the piece of mica now produces a new emotion "kindred to that which was before" but not simply a repetition of it.²⁷ We have here, in the personal realm, what

Buber much later calls, in writing of the Israelite exodus, a "mythisation of history" in which memory shapes an event but in response to an original eventfulness: "the memory itself is transformed as it plunges out of its isolation into the unity of the whole."²⁸ When Buber writes here of the three spheres in which the world of relation arises, he says, "First, our life with nature."²⁹ Nevertheless, here the identification of primary with primitive is broken, for the relation with nature is modelled after the relationship between persons which is the primary one, the main portal. The earlier "mystical" experience cannot fully be understood by themselves; what happened later is the pointer to their real significance. So the tree is here and so is the stone; but the tree is "no impression, no play of my imagination",³⁰ and of the stone he says:

O fragment of mica, looking on which I
learned for the first time that I is not
something "in me" - with you I was never-
theless only bound up in myself; at that
time the event took place only in me, not
between me and you.³¹

There is room in this word-ordering not only for such reinterpretations, but also for theological discussion so long as it is spoken as word and not just "content". Without foot-noting, without even naming, Buber can protest that Otto reduces religion to psychology³² or that Brunner misunderstands idolatry when he supposes that man's relation to the idol and to God can be the same, that it is only a question of a change of "object".³³

Buber's own personal life, also, is included but also only through indirect indications which accords with the pronomial and anonymous understanding of I as well as Thou here. I am my speaking to you now: the rest drops away. Hasidism and the Bible are the source of much of the imagery and patterning but, again, this is an unnamed presence which meets us unannounced as for example in Buber's allusion to Jacob and the angel when he says that the moment of meeting is "at times like a wrestling bout".³⁴

The book is not just an ordering of words but the presence of a word-order,³⁵ not directed by the dancing of sensuous images nor by the meaning of an abstractable content, but by working. Now for Buber word and the working of spirit are seen as one. We discover this not through his saying so but through hearing how each is spoken of:

Speech does not abide in man, but man takes his stand in speech and talks from there. Spirit is not in the I, but between I and Thou. It is not like the blood that circulates in you, but like the air which you breathe.³⁶

The word is a spoken-ness, an event taking place in time, "man's bond with God which is always taking place".³⁷ So this book also takes place in time; it is not meant to be surveyed as a whole which is spatially present all at once. Time becomes an aspect of the form as well as of the content as it does in Mann's Magic Mountain, and in music. We are to follow the movement but not because it is going anywhere.

Buber seeks to present us with a word-order that like the world-order as it is perceived in moments of silent depth is "fully present".³⁸ The Thou is not lived as part of a continuous and organized sequence, but is lived in a 'duration' whose purely intensive dimension is definable only in terms of itself."³⁹

Buber's words in I and Thou are spoken within the world of word as man's creative activity takes place within God's creation. The book presents to us "the world as word", the universe made manifest as language.⁴⁰ In this sense I and Thou is more dramatic even though outwardly so much less dialogical than Daniel. The book takes place within the world of man's word. It is spoken not in paradise but here among men where It and Thou are intermingled: "This is the melancholy of our fate and its greatness."⁴¹ Here how another, how we, respond to Buber's word is recognized as part of the drama. Buber speaks of the sacrifice and risk involved in putting into word, giving form:

I lead the form across - into the world of It. The word produced is a thing among things, able to be experienced and described as a sum of qualities. But from time to time it can face the receptive beholder in its whole embodied form.⁴²

The form lies asleep in the structure and longs as in a dream (or as in Perrault's tale of the Sleeping Beauty) for a man who will lift the ban and clasp the form.⁴³

The different form of saying by Buber calls for a different reading, a new form of responding, from us. And this call to us is just what the book is. What is asked for is not the fantasy-thinking, the free subjective association, which Daniel led us to but a "following" of Buber's words:

to.....answer as they come like
dancers to the music, keeping whole
by changing when it changes.⁴⁴

Thus we are led but never behind. The sense of recognition when we find ourselves already readied for the next turn is a sign that we are indeed following, that we have met by arriving there at the same time. So a question at the beginning of a section: "That melancholy of our Fate, then, arose in earliest history?",⁴⁵ appears as a sign that Buber is aware of our listening-asking presence. The question about paradise, "But you believe then in the existence of a paradise in the earliest days of mankind?",⁴⁶ is indeed one that, in response to the allusions to the separation of the primal parents, we are on the very point of asking, though our question is only now given shape as Buber puts it.

When we come to "Part Two" of the book we immediately notice a difference of tone. In place of the simple, almost abrupt, sentences of the first part, we have long paragraphs and a style which seems to insist on its impersonality. The world of It is described in the language of It. We find connectives such as "or", "but", "hence", "despite"; phrases

like "call in question", "beside the point", "compare", "precisely". The first paragraph is thick with words like "about", "enlarging", "expanding", "absorbing", "progressively augmenting". What we have in this Part is the making present, the enacting, of the "progressive augmentation of the world if It." ⁴⁷ For the moment Thou seems to have gone underground, yet we discover that this is "a spoken It (which is) fundamentally a Thou, its presentness remembered as it were remotely with the whole being." ⁴⁸ Even this section of the book is fundamentally address if we are open to hearing it, if it really leads us to miss the Thou, to know its absence. Yet implicit here is also the recognition that this speaking may be experienced and used as an It (and perhaps an intuition of how readily the phrase I-Thou itself becomes a counter for "explanation" of "spiritual" life), ⁴⁹ and that if this happens then "it remains a total stranger", ⁵⁰ as was indicated in Part One.

Without Thou there is self and world, the world as It at my disposal; there are two provinces, the inner and the outer, feelings and institutions. There is the I, the ghostly I of It: at home in a rocking chair in the boudoir, an uneasily fluttering soul bird, a flitting almost-moment, the ghost within, the soul's spectre. ⁵¹ And there is It: the market place, the animated clod without a soul (the golem), an incubus, stagnant fens, stifling fate, exuberant jungle, the unpenetrated and unfruitful, the world's

nightmare, fate.⁵² Logically these images are self-contradictory, "a centreless Many", because they develop where there is no place for development.⁵³ They cannot be "added up" but they culminate in the final nightmare with which this section closes: the two sets of moving pictures, in one man is embedded in the world and its history, in the other the world is imbedded in the I. "But a moment comes and it is near when the shuddering man looks up and sees both pictures in a flash together. And a deeper shudder seizes him." ⁵⁴ Yet this terrible image bears within it a word of hope. This unspoken word is what leads us toward and into the third section; it is a word spoken earlier which we now remember:

There is no going backwards, but in the very moment of deepest need a hitherto undreamt-of movement forwards and outwards.⁵⁵

Buber quotes Hölderlin:

Where there is danger the rescuing force also grows.⁵⁶

The moment of the shudder is the moment before creation; this is "the world of It over which the presence of the Thou moves like the spirit upon the face of the waters."⁵⁷ The world of It will not really be left behind as we move into the last part of the book "for it is not decision to do the one and leave the other a lifeless mass." ⁵⁸ "Creation is not a hurdle on the way to God, it is the road itself."⁵⁹

"Part Three" begins with a re-saying of the last lines of "Part One"; many of the phrases, images, and motifs from both the earlier parts reappear in this centering on the eternal Thou, the Thou "in which all parallel lines of relation" meet.⁶⁰ In the presence of Thou we can awaken from the nightmare at the end of "Part Two"; what is a contradiction in the situation of It is no longer one:

Certainly the world "dwells" in me as an image, just as I dwell in it as a thing. But it is not for that reason in me, just as I am not in it. The world and I are mutually included the one in the other.⁶¹

This Part presents the relation of all particular Thous to the eternal Thou, the relation of non-fulfillment to fulfillment. The eternal Thou is here the word of God, the word through which man is addressed, the word which reveals within the disappointments suffered in the change of every particular Thou into It the meaning of a fulfilled relationship. Presentness, presence, and the Thou belong to one another. Thou is "the uncanny primary word";⁶² here as in Freud "the uncanny" is that which leads back to something long known to us, once very familiar.⁶³ For Buber the pronomial Thou is very important; it is not meant as a "name" for God but as a pointing to the inadequacy of all naming. "I do not believe in a self-naming of God.....The Word of revelation is I am that I am."⁶⁴ Buber says that He is a metaphor but that Thou is not; Thou is on the other side of symbolization as Tillich's "God beyond God" is also meant to be. But Buber insists that the word-beyond-metaphor must

convey the person-ness of God, his being as itself a word-being, the being of one who addresses and is addressed, who is not a particular "object" of address but is addressed in every particular Thou. As Buber puts it in a later essay: "Speaking with God is totally different from speaking with oneself but not from speaking with another human being - for they have in common being approached, grasped, addressed."⁶⁵ God is addressed with the same Thou one addresses to man: "Who could suppose that God wants Thou to be truly said only to him and to all others only an unessential and fundamentally invalid word?"⁶⁶ Here we see how subtly translation may suggest a shift in meaning: the natural and intimate Du used every day in addressing my neighbor becomes in English the stilted and uncommon, liturgical-sounding Thou and so suggests almost a reversal of the relationship Buber means to present between the Thou addressed to God and the one spoken to man.⁶⁷

The choice of the pronomial and personal is not intended as an anthropomorphism. What Spinoza failed to understand, says Buber, and what therefore brought him to natura sive deus is that the teaching that God is also a person is an augmentation of divinity in contrast to all impersonal, unaddressable "purity" of God.⁶⁸ Nor does it matter if the Thou is actually spoken: Buddha's believing himself to be godless is belied by his sense of standing-over-against reality.⁶⁹ God has been addressed with many names and these names are hallowed because with them he

can be spoken to as well as about; through them Thou may be spoken. Buber would say that it is only the pagan who does not recognize Him in each of His garments.⁷⁰ In a later essay where God is presented more as the original Thou-speaker rather than as here the one eternally addressed by man's Thou, Buber says that out of the "moment Gods", the gods of the particular encounters, "there arises for us with a single identity the Lord of the voice, the One" as a poet's many poems combine to form "the one polyphony of the person's existence."⁷¹

The book ends with a description of "the course and the counter-course of the eternal and eternally present Word in history." This course includes the times of revelation, of living form, and of the death of the form. "Till there comes the great shudder, the holding of the breath in the dark, and the preparing silence."⁷² "This course is not circular. It is the way."⁷³ In this last paragraph we have a condensation of the whole book's movement. This image of the spiral is the old image of despair: the whirl; but now: the way up is the way down. The "spiral descent through the spiritual underworld" can

also be called an ascent to the innermost, finest, most complicated whirlpool, where there is no advance and no retreat, but only utterly new reversal - the breakthrough.⁷⁴

But Buber is pointing here to something closer to the Chinese view of a meta-cosmical rhythm than to a Heraclitean

paradox. Hope and despair seem now to be as deeply intertwined as are yin and yang: the soil of despair is the soil of rebirth.⁷⁵ I-it and I-Thou are expressions of a primal rhythm, the double movement of estrangement and return. Buber's vision of this twofoldness reminds us of the I-Ching where the most "masculine" hexagram, "the Creative", is the one on the point of turning into the wholly feminine one, "the Receptive".⁷⁶ The reversal, the turning, for which Buber hopes depends on the directionless whirl being withstood and hallowed; on the incubus being seized and addressed by name.⁷⁷ Such hallowing again suggests the artist's transformation of endless possibility into a work. Buber believes that even the most alienated man "in the unloved knowledge of the depths within him", really knows the direction of turning,⁷⁸ that even in him the person (the I of I-Thou) "leads a hidden subterranean and as it were cancelled existence - till it is recalled." ⁷⁹

The break-through, is the receiving of direction, "utterly new reversal".⁸⁰ In later books Buber gives more attention to the moments of "gentlest break-through",⁸¹ the moments of renewal as well as of utterly new beginning, to faith as trust and not just conversion, to such continuity between the blazing moments as marriage represents. As Buber learns more deeply what it means to give up the exception, to possess nothing but the everyday, he sees that "dialogical life continues, even when (the two) are separated

in space as the continual potential presence of the one to the other, as an unexpressed intercourse";⁸² for this, marriage is the paradigm. Marriage means taking in earnest that

I cannot legitimately share in the Present Being without sharing in the being of the other.....that I cannot answer the lifelong address of God to me without answering at the same time for the other.....This person is other, essentially other than myself and this otherness of his is what I mean to exist because I wish his particular being to exist.⁸³

In I and Thou, however, the focus is on the more dramatic reversals, "the great shudder",⁸⁴ "the volcanic hours in which all is topsy-turvy and an outburst takes place",⁸⁵ or "the trial of the final darkness".⁸⁶

Buber is speaking here not only of the personal revelations that come to the individual but of the mighty revelations "at the turning of an age". These mighty revelations, too, come to an individual, one like the Old Testament prophet who then becomes their mouth. They come as a vision manifestly suprapersonal in nature in which the spirit produces a "new form of God in the world".⁸⁷ So this book, this word, "I and Thou", which presents Buber's turning, is meant to make turning itself present before us. By describing the fate of these forms in the same language he had used to describe the fate of the artist's formations earlier, Buber again suggests (without asserting) the correspondence between the poet and the prophet. Our age, and not

just the individuals in it, is at a turning: "The situation of the world itself in the most serious sense, the relation between man and God, has changed."⁸⁸ But the breakthrough itself is not present-ed here. Though it comes "ever nearer, increasingly near",⁸⁹ it itself lies just beyond this word, on the other side. The book ends: "The event that from the side of the world is called turning is called from God's side redemption".⁹⁰ The book is a calling to God as well as to each of us, a call of hope which rises from the faith that when man calls, God answers, which bears within it faith's in-spite-of and through: "Every spiral of its way leads both into profounder perversion and more fundamental turning".⁹¹ It is almost as though Picard were echoing these words as he closes Man and Language:

If man takes what is lacking completely seriously, if he is constantly aware that the lack of the pre-given substance (language) in his structure is making him ill, the seriousness of his awareness will reach by its very truth to the creative beginnings of things and hence to the pre-given original substance.⁹²

Is there a "content" to the hope voiced here? In a sense, not; it is just that open-ness to the unknown which Austin Farrar describes as being at work in the writing of the Book of Revelation. Only a little later Buber writes: "It is the night of an expectation, not of a vague hope. We expect a theophany of which we know nothing but the place, which is community."⁹³ Virgil tells Dante when he has lost his way that the only way of finding the right way is to

descend into spiralled hell (the place of no-hope, of despair); because the pilgrim has been sent there this part of the journey, too, is an act of grace. To be out of hell means restored to "the real world", where one can see the stars again. The words of I and Thou point us to that which lies beyond, not be a reality beyond word and event, but to an event still to be awaited, a word not yet spoken.



The three essays written in the decade or so after the publication of I and Thou which are included in Between Man and Man⁹⁴ are "exploration" of the vision, elaboration, clarification, exemplification. We open these pages and discover a new easiness of tone; there is much less of a "style" none of the complex and subtle interweavings of I and Thou. No indication is given that the right shape had to be waited for; it and these insights seem to have quite naturally appeared together. Buber simply says what he has to say, as in the less formal discussion after an address. His own experiences, his own way to the insight, now seem to be the only way of pointing to it; they themselves and not just their universalized form belong to the telling.

Buber begins the first of these essays, Dialogue, with "Original Remembrance", the report of a recurring dream which brings him to a treasure already there, much as Eisik's

dream of the treasure buried near the king's palace had in the end led him to the treasure under his own bed.⁹⁵ The dream begins with a lion cub's tearing furiously at his arm, then as the pace of the dream slows, Buber cries out and soon from somewhere far away there comes an answering cry, not an echo of his but its full response, a corresponding cry which wakens in him the certitude that now it has happened. But in this dream's most recent recurrence there came no answering cry, because for the first time he had awaited it; always before it had come as a surprise. But then as he listened, not only with the ear but with a fully sensate be-ing, the answer came, but "really it did not come; it was there.....even before my call" and seemed to exceed "the earlier rejoinder in an unknown perfection which is hard to define, for it resides in the fact that it was already there".⁹⁶ What Buber discovered here, what discovered itself to Buber, was that all calling and answering takes place within an original answering that is already there; thus this "original remembrance" is a remembrance of origin, what Heidegger might call an end to the forgetting of being.

It is implicit in I and Thou but not there the stressed insight, that God is the addressor, that all man's conversation takes place within his original speaking, the creation, and as response. This understanding here become event in dream seems to have ripened within Buber through the intensive exposure to the Bible which took place within those years immediately after the writing of I and Thou.

The scriptures taught Buber to recognize Israel as "the one who knows God as addressor".⁹⁷ As Picard writes:

In the Old Testament God spoke to man directly. Man was not the speaker but the one spoken to. Space itself spoke; the words were engraved in the air. Men breathed in the words of God with the air. Words were laws. Obeying the laws was man's response. Man obeyed the laws; thus he had language.

Later on, man abandoned the law and language abandoned him.....Language is empty because God no longer speaks. Human language hovers around this emptiness forsaken by God.....Language is still alive today because it was once the vehicle of holy things.⁹⁸

In "Silence is Communication" we see how all relating that takes place within this remembrance of origin, that is, within this remembrance of language, is conversation even though there be neither sound nor gesture. The verbal articulation of the Thou is not the clue to genuine communication. Yet "to understand 'say' as a metaphor is not to understand".⁹⁹ Buber speaks of several wordless encounters in which nevertheless "a word demanding an answer" happened to him.¹⁰⁰ Buber says that "living means being addressed",¹⁰¹ that "what occurs to me addresses me".¹⁰² "The true name of concrete reality is the creation which is entrusted to me and to every man. In it the signs of address are given to us."¹⁰³ The world is creation, is God's speech directed to us. The events and situations of our personal everyday life are words addressed precisely to us. Our doing and letting are the words of our response. In all his writing after I and Thou

Buber seeks to make us recognize the eventfulness of word and the speakingness of event, to get us to see events as word-events and words as word-events.

What Buber is saying here concerning responsibility as a responding to creation as it happens¹⁰⁴ becomes a directive to us as responders to this creation. When we are freed from trying to get hold of an extractable meaning or even from tracing the form's unwinding way, then our attention turns to the details, the unstressed imagery. For it is "perseverance in concreteness",¹⁰⁵ care for the immediate and particular which is the way. As Helmut Kuhn realizes, it is almost impossible for us to pay too much attention to Buber's images and symbols, for they are not only illustrations but are born together with the thoughts.¹⁰⁶ Kuhn illustrates how every image tells a story, by taking the metaphor in this passage from Between Man and Man:

The Word of God crosses my vision like a falling star to whose fire the meteorite will bear witness without making it light up for me, and I myself can only bear witness to the light but not produce the stone and say "This is it".¹⁰⁷

He shows how the contrast between the flashing light and the dead stone is related to the exaltation of the irrational in the lebensphilosophie of Nietzsche and Bergson and Dilthey and Simmel. Yet, he says, because here the direction is clear, here the meteor clearly comes from above, "a dam has been raised against the heraclitean flood, the waters separate and a narrow ridge is formed." ¹⁰⁸ Kuhn seems here to be showing

how "in the depths of his imagery the artist cannot lie", that the metaphor more clearly than all declarations shows Buber's emancipation from his teachers and his own youth.

Buber wants to show now how unpretentious yet significant are the signs and gestures through which communion takes place. They are like "the glances which strangers exchange in a busy street as they pass one another with unchanging pace." ¹⁰⁹ Buber recognizes that what he wants to say cannot be conveyed in ideas but only represented by example, "provided that, where the matter is important, we do not eschew taking examples from the most personal recesses of the personal life. For where else should the like be found?" ¹¹⁰ The question of how one relates one's dreams, how one tells of what is most important to one, is no longer answered as before. Now we do not disguise them as fairy-tales nor give them only a background presence, but very simply speak of them, speak them, let them speak themselves. What is to be said cannot meaningfully be detached from the "teaching event"; that is still to misunderstand "meaning" as a "what", to misunderstand form as only an esthetic "how". So again and again in these pages Buber will say: "I can answer it adequately only by confession"; ¹¹¹ "from my own unforgettable experience I know well....." ¹¹² In the section, "The Signs", he speaks of what it is to know oneself addressed by whatever occurs to one though there is no dictionary to interpret or translate such signs, for this address is a new word spoken for the first time here and to me, a word

of question and demand not information or comfort. Then, having prepared us with these other "confessions", Buber gives here the story of his meeting with the unknown young man.

In "Of Thinking" Buber considers the relation between artistic and conceptual communication, a question which his continued concern with the relation between form and content will often return him to. Buber says that all art is from its origin dialogue. Music calls to an ear not the musician's own; sculpture invites the eye and even the touch; and architecture "calls to the step as it walks in the building".¹¹³ Each says something that can be said only in this one language. Yet, it would be a mistake to believe that thought unlike art arises in monologue. He then speaks of the forming of thought very much as in I and Thou he had spoken of the artists' bodying forth. The "arising of thought" and the forming of thought happen in the presence of a basic order "in face of which" the thinker "has to answer for" his insight or newly arrived conceptual form. He addresses that demanding-to-be-formed insight, not himself, and answers to his "genius" for it, to the spirit he is intended to become; for in such forming, too, there is a transformation of self.¹¹⁴ Perhaps this, too, is confession, a reference to the forming of I and Thou so much less "artistic" and more "thought-full" than the earlier writings and yet perhaps even less than they arise as monologue. This also clearly opens the way to the inclusion of any "form" of speaking,

any theological methodology, so long as it has its origin
in origin, in dialogue.

Buber ends this work with a word about the personal
 examples which it includes:

I have had to choose (them) as "purely"
 and as much in the form of paradigm as
 memory presented them to me in order to
 make myself intelligible about what has
 become so unfamiliar..... so sunk in
 oblivion.¹¹⁵

In order, that is, to make them reminders of origin. So
 he draws his tales "from the province where things succeed,
 are rounded off, are in fact exemplary" ¹¹⁶ but he is not
 concerned with the pure, but with the turbid and pedestrian,
 with toil and dull contrariness - and with the break-
 through:

With the break-through and not with a per-
 fection....not with the great catastrophic
 break-through which happens once for all
only (with) this tiny strictness and
 grace of everyday.....All the regulated
 chaos of the age waits for the break-through,
 and wherever a man perceives and responds,
 he is working toward that end.¹¹⁷

So Dialogue is the presentation of these confessions of the
 single events which have become paradigms of God's way with
 man in this world. Here Buber speaks of a truthful speaking
 about such personal events in a way which points forward to
 his description of Israel's way of experiencing and remember-
 ing her own history. Such "signal" events are "truthfully"
 related precisely if their essence as paradigm is carefully

elaborated. A dramatic highlighting will from this point of view be not a falsification but an increase of truth. This analogy suggests that the changes in Buber's way of telling apparent here grow out of his deep immersion in the translating of the Bible during these intervening years.

In Education, another of these clarifying essays, Buber speaks of the particular form which relationship takes between the true teacher and his pupil. They stand "in the common situation of 'educating' and 'being educated' (which is indeed one situation, only the other is at the other end of it)",¹¹⁸ but here the experiencing of the other side, though concrete, must remain one-sided:

However intense the mutuality of giving and taking with which he is bound to his pupil, inclusion cannot be mutual in this case. (The teacher) experiences the pupil's being educated, but the pupil cannot experience the educating of the educator. The educator stands at both ends of the common situation, the pupil only at one end. In the moment when the pupil is able to throw himself across and experience from over there, the educative relation would be burst asunder, or change into friendship.¹¹⁹

This conception of education as a dialogue in which the teacher "means" the person of the pupil as he whom he is created to become¹²⁰ and in which the teacher, too, can learn from the pupil's unique and individual experiences at the same time that he helps the pupil advance from his own experience to an organic knowledge of life and the world¹²¹ leads Buber elsewhere to question the Socratic method:

Socrates conducts his dialogue by posing questions and proving the answers that he received untenable; these are not real questions; they are moves in a sublime dialectical game that has a goal, the goal of revealing a not-knowing.¹²²

Buber believes that when the true teacher asks his pupil a question, he asks as the simple, unphilosophical man asks. He really wants to know something, namely, just that which only this young person can know to say on this subject: a small individual experience:

The teacher will awaken in the pupil the need to communicate of himself and the capacity thereto, and in this way bring him to a greater clarity of existence. But he also learns, himself, through teaching thus; he learns ever anew, to know concretely the becoming of the human creature that takes place in experiences; he learns what no man ever learns completely, the particular, the individual, the unique. No, certainly no full partnership; but still a characteristic kind of reciprocity, still a real dialogue.¹²³

The real otherness of the other is even more important in a dialogue of full partnership, a dialogue between philosophers where each receives a greater clarity of existence from the confrontation with another who thinks other things in another way.¹²⁴ Buber has said that while he was composing I and Thou he could read no philosophy except Descartes' Discourse on Method¹²⁵ and that his own aim of bearing witness to an experience accessible in some manner to all men seems to him close to Descartes' intention.¹²⁶ Descartes presents that work "only as a story"

from which his reader should take only that which he is ready to receive: "My intention is not to teach here the method which everyone ought to follow in order to conduct his reason correctly, but only to point out how I have tried to conduct my own." 127 He invites his readers to join him in his experiment, which doesn't mean accepting his conclusions but simply following a similar method; he asks for their responses. 128

Buber, also, has asked for the responses of others to the word spoken in I and Thou. He thinks of theology as dialogue, as arising out of and leading back to conversation. In an essay on drama as a species of poetry written during this same period Buber says that in drama all action is carried by conversation; word and event are one; words neither describe nor produce action but are event. He speaks of the word as moving between beings and embodying the mystery and tension of word and answer:

Essential to drama is the fact.....that two men never mean the same things by the words they use; that there is, therefore, no pure reply; that at each point of the conversation, therefore, understanding and misunderstanding are interwoven; from which comes then the interplay of open-ness and closed-ness, expression and reserve. 129

As we listen to the dialogue between Buber and his fellow theologians and philosophers we are not concerned with tracing either the previous or subsequent history of the dialogical principle, but only with the understanding how Buber's

word arises as response to the thought of others and how, in turn, his work has been fruitfully received by his own contemporaries. We are also interested in seeing how his critics help us to understand the kind of speaking that I and Thou is, help us to recognize that Buber's refusal to agree that Thou is a metaphor when used for the eternal Thou, or that "say" is a metaphor when applied to authentic but wordless communication, though it expresses his refusal to have I and Thou be reduced to being "only metaphor", nevertheless suggests a failure to see that theology must be metaphorical which prevents Buber from fully following up the implications of his own insight.

Notes for Chapter Four:

1. Hesse, Hermann, Siddhartha, New Directions, New York, 1951, p. 150-153.
2. Israel and the World, p. 46.
3. I and Thou, p. 123.
4. Ibid., p. 129.
5. Eliot, T. S., Four Quartets, p. 16.
6. I and Thou, p. 127.
7. Ibid., p. 6.
8. Ibid., p. x.
9. Ibid., p. 9.
10. Ibid., p. 6.
11. Ibid., p. 9.
12. Ibid., p. 10.
13. Ibid., loc. cit.
14. Ibid., loc. cit.
15. Ibid., p. 17.
16. Ibid., p. 3.
17. Wheelwright, Philip, Heraclitus, Atheneum, New York, 1964, p. 18.
18. Ibid., p. 90, Fragments 108, 109, 110.
19. I and Thou, p. 3
20. Ibid., p. 4.
21. Ibid., p. 11.
22. Ibid., p. 32.
23. Ibid., p. 32.
24. Heraclitus, Fragment 31.
25. I and Thou, p. 17.

26. Ibid., p. 100.
27. Wordsworth, William, "Observations Prefixed to 'Lyrical Ballads'" in Schorer, Mark et al., eds., Criticism, Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York, 1948, p. 39, my italics.
28. I and Thou, p. 11.
29. Ibid., p. 6.
30. Ibid., p. 8.
31. I and Thou, p. 98.
32. Ibid., p. 81.
33. Ibid., p. 105.
34. Ibid., p. 109.
35. Ibid., p. 31.
36. Ibid., p. 39.
37. Israel and the World, p. 180.
38. I and Thou, p. 31.
39. Ibid., p. 30.
40. Ibid., p. 103.
41. I and Thou, p. 40.
42. Ibid., p. 10.
43. Ibid., p. 41.
44. Ciardi, John, I Marry You, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 1958, p. 22.
45. I and Thou, p. 23.
46. Ibid., p. 24.
47. Ibid., p. 37, 38.
48. Ibid., p. 62.
49. Ibid., p. 38.
50. Ibid., p. 32.

51. Ibid., p. 70, 43, 44, 46, 59.
52. Ibid., p. 43, 44, 46, 54, 59.
53. Ibid., p. 52, 69, 70.
54. Ibid., p. 72.
55. Ibid., p. 50.
56. Ibid., p. 56.
57. Ibid., p. 48.
58. Ibid., p. 52.
59. Between Man and Man, p. 52.
60. I and Thou, p. 33.
61. I and Thou, p. 93.
62. I and Thou, p. 34.
63. Freud, Sigmund, "The 'Uncanny'" in On Creativity and the Unconscious, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1958, p. 122-161.
64. I and Thou, p. 112.
65. Between Man and Man, p. 50.
66. Ibid., p. 54.
67. Cf. the distortion that results when Freud's book Das Ich und das Es, originally also published in 1923, is called in English The Ego and the Id.
68. Origin and Meaning of Hasidism, p. 92.
69. Eclipse of God, p. 27, 28.
70. Israel and the World, p. 30.
71. Between Man and Man, p. 15.
72. I and Thou, p. 119.
73. Ibid., loc. cit.
74. Ibid., p. 56.
75. Ibid., p. 61.

76. Ibid., p. 24.
77. Ibid., p. 58.
78. I and Thou, p. 70.
79. Ibid., p. 65.
80. Ibid., p. 56.
81. Origin and Meaning, p. 103.
82. Between Man and Man, p. 97.
83. Ibid., p. 61.
84. I and Thou, p. 119.
85. Israel and the World, p. 45.
86. I and Thou, p. 56.
87. Ibid., p. 117.
88. Between Man and Man, p. 7.
89. I and Thou, p. 120.
90. Ibid., p. 120.
91. Ibid., p. 120.
92. Picard, Man and Language, p. 155.
93. Between Man and Man, p. 7. This realization that "the dialogic life" can really only happen in a community which develops out of "a common relation to the divine centre, even if this be again and still nameless" (Pointing the Way, p. 112) leads toward the already remarked reinterpretation of Israel as meaning a call to community for the sake of all mankind, it leads toward the interest in religious socialism later expressed in Paths to Utopia, and to a new appreciation of Hasidism as belonging within Judaism and in relation to the bindingness of law, as Zen belongs within Buddhism and in the context of the disciplines of the Samurai culture. Cf. the 1928 presentation of The Baal-Shem not through legend but through his "Instruction in Intercourse with God", included in Hasidism and Modern man.
94. "Dialogue", 1929; "The Question to the Single One", 1936; "Education", 1926. We shall consider the 1936 essay in Chapter 7 below.

95. Tales of the Hasidim: Later Masters, p. 245.
96. Between Man and Man, p. 1-3.
97. Origin and Meaning, p. 91.
98. Picard, Man and Language, p. 18.
99. Between Man and Man, p. 9.
100. Ibid., p. 10.
101. Ibid., p. 10.
102. Ibid., p. 11
103. Ibid., p. 13.
104. Ibid., p. 16.
105. Ibid., p. 25.
106. Schillp and Friedman, op. cit., p. 550.
107. Between Man and Man, p. 7.
108. Schillp and Friedman, op. cit., p. 553.
109. Between Man and Man, p. 5.
110. Ibid., loc. cit.
111. Ibid., p. 7.
112. Ibid., p. 24.
113. Ibid., p. 25.
114. Ibid., p. 26.
115. Ibid., p. 35.
116. Ibid., p. 36.
117. Ibid., p. 36, 39.
118. Ibid., p. 100.
119. Ibid., loc. cit.
120. Rome, Sydney and Beatrice, editors, Philosophical Interrogations, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1964, p. 66.

121. Ibid., p. 67.
122. Ibid., loc. cit.
123. Ibid., p. 68.
124. Between Man and Man, p. 27.
125. Werke, Vol. 1, p. 300.
126. Rome, op. cit., p. 18.
127. Descrates, Rene, Essential Works of, Bantam Books, New York, 1961, p. 3.
128. Ibid., p. 43, 45.
129. Pointing the Way, p. 63.

Chapter Five

Theology as Dialogue.

A game:

Now we know it! We understand that God is "Wholly Other", that to talk of him is to talk him away, that all we can tell is what is his effect on us. The result of this stupendous accuracy is that, just because we are accurate, we now stand in a circle like children: one says something quite accurate; his neighbor snubs him with the still more accurate statement that his utterance was false because it was accurate, and so we make the rounds until we get back to the first. The whole procedure is called theology.²

CHORUS: We have been a conversation

And have been able to hear from one another³

(Solo voices from the Chorus:)

FERDINAND EBNER: Speech is the ever new establishment of the relation between I and Thou.⁴

FRANZ ROSENZWEIG: Speech is bound to time and nourished by time, and it neither can nor wants to abandon this element. It does not know in advance just where it will end. It takes its cue from others. In fact, it lives by virtue of another's life, whether that other is the one who listens to a story, answers in the course of a dialogue, or joins in a chorus.⁵

KARL HEIM: The discovery of the Thou is a Copernican revolution, an elemental happening as rich in consequences as the idealist discovery of the I.⁶

PAUL TILLICH: Buber's existential I-Thou philosophy reaches the very depths of the situation and should be a powerful help in reversing the victory of the It over the Thou and the I in present civilization.⁷

GABRIEL MARCEL: I, too, came to this central insight at the same time but Buber went much deeper than I.⁸

WALTER KAUFMANN: What Buber said of Feuerbach I can say of him: "I myself in my youth was given a decisive impetus

by" Martin Buber.⁹

(The Chorus withdraws.)

MARTIN BUBER: This is what I hoped for, to speak to the amicus who knows about the reality to which I am pointing with a finger I should like to be able to stretch out like Grunewald's Baptist.

I had hoped also for the adversarius who would take what I have said just as seriously as I myself do. Where philosophy is most earnest in the desire to ask its questions on the basis of human existence, we have the Thou in opposition because we truly have the other who thinks other things in another way.¹⁰

LUDWIG FEUERBACH: I spoke of that longing for a trying and testing of one's thought in the sphere of dialogue long ago: "True dialectic is not a monologue of the solitary thinker with himself, it is a dialogue between I and Thou." In fact in so much of what you have written I hear echoes of my own thought.¹¹

MARTIN BUBER: In all ages it has undoubtedly been glimpsed that the saying of Thou by the I stands in the origin of all individual human becoming. This glimpse is expressed in the immediacy of its own language in Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi's formulation of 1785: "The I is impossible without the Thou." ¹²

The difference between It and Thou is implicit in Kant's formulation of the categorical imperative and though

I cannot try to escape the paradox that has to be lived by assigning the irreconcilable propositions to two different realms of validity and so cannot fit my thought to the Kantian schema, nevertheless I know I have never fully liberated myself from Kant.¹³

The importance of the dialogical has ever again been glimpsed but I myself met it first in you, Feuerbach, and then in Soren Kierkegaard. My Yes and No to you both had already in my student days become a part of my existence.¹⁴

When you said, "The individual man for himself does not have man's being in himself, either as a moral being or as a thinking being; man's being is contained only in community, in the unity of man with man - a unity, which rests, however, only on the reality of the difference between I and Thou", I said, "Yes". Where I could not follow you was when you then spoke of man with man, the unity of I and Thou, as God, and so introduced an ersatz mythical construction and left behind the earthly concreteness of human dialogue.¹⁵

With Kierkegaard, on the other hand, the human Thou is never transparent into the divine. He failed to see that God wants us to come to him by way of the Reginas he has created and not in renunciation of them.¹⁶

NATAN ROTENSTREICH: I think, Buber, you are here close to what distinguishes you not only from these teachers but also from your more immediate and actual ones, from the

lebensphilosophs such as Dilthey and Simmel: again and again you begin with and never leave man's embodied being. What for you is concreteness is for Feuerbach just sensuality; what for you is the road is for Kierkegaard the hurdle on the road; where you materialize the event which calls for Verstehen for Dilthey it was still basically a cognitive situation.¹⁷

JOHN McDERMOTT: It is Buber's recognition of the It that frees him from the one-sidedness of the thinkers in the tradition of Kierkegaard and enables him to root his I-Thou philosophy in the fullness of the real. What is significant in this affirmation of Buber's is that the objects surrounding man are, though insufficient, indispensable to him.¹⁸

MARTIN BUBER: The world in which we find our way and whose coherent knowledge we transmit from generation to generation can exist only on the basis of the I-it relationship. I am not empowered to formulate a metaphysical thesis that would lead beyond the duality of I-It and I-Thou, but I have attempted to show how the two aspects have again and again co-operated in the human construction and reconstruction of a "world" accessible to human thought.¹⁹

Yet those who complain that I haven't done the I-It aspect justice are right. I haven't found that in this time I have the right to do that; my task has been to return man to his Thou.²⁰

It has also been rightly objected that I have not sufficiently dealt with the relationship of the human person to nature. There remains here, as in many of the border areas between the two attitudes, something of basic importance to be done that is not granted me to do myself. But I may hope that it will be done without surrendering the unconditionality of the distinction.²¹

NATAN ROTENSTREICH: My questions have to do with what you have done, more than with what you have left undone. They may appear to be questions about content but I believe they are really questions about form.

I do not question the factual importance of man-with-man, but as a philosopher I want to know the ontological status of this dimension of human existence. In I and Thou I seem to discern an oscillation between factual description of human life and the intended ontology of it. Or is this basically an imperative, a call to what should be; is mutuality an entelecheia?²²

The form of I and Thou, its presentation of variations on a theme rather than of a systematic elaboration, leaves so many questions unanswered, so much still to be explained. Is the I-Thou relation a priori or inborn? How will you untangle this confusion of two philosophical traditions? Is the relation to the fellow human being or to God primary? If you say man, does this make God only a Platonic Ideal of Thou-ness? The form of I and Thou makes it possible for you to avoid making clear your

teaching about such questions.²³

MARTIN BUBER: I would gladly dispense with the mere inimicus, which is how I regard everyone who wishes to relegate me to the realm of ideology and there let my thoughts count.²⁴

But let me try to answer once again: I have no teaching. I take the one who listens to me by the hand and lead him to the window. I open it and point out. I have no teaching, but I participate in a conversation.²⁵

The form of I and Thou is that through which I could say what I had to say: I cannot say which is primary, the relation to God or man; although in personal life the encounter with man comes first. The confusion of the language of the a priori and the language of the innate, of the ontological with the instinctual, is a way of pointing to mutuality as a fundamental datum, more fundamental than any way of speaking about it.²⁶

I and Thou came in the beginning. Even to me it now seems not exact enough, too rich in associations. I wrote it in an irresistible inspiration. Such a work one can not go back and change, even for the sake of exactness, for one can only judge what would be gained, not what would be lost.²⁷

FRITZ KAUFMANN: For us also, despite all theoretical and practical difficulties, I and Thou is a work that can not be taken back.

You presented us here not with a list of categories but with Urworten, primary words, modes of the human way not pillars of being's order. We cannot expect a system of categories if the picture of the world is not meant to become a thinkable after-picture, if it is not meant to serve for orientation. The word of the way can be a pointer but not a concept.²⁸

MARTIN BUBER: You are right: my philosophy is not systematic though it is "together-hanging".²⁹

JAMES BROWN: It may be felt by the literally minded that language is here being pressed beyond what is in its power to express. On the other hand it may equally be felt that there are aspects of the real world and of real living which only such "poetry" is adequate to shadow forth. All that cool philosophy will then be able to do is to estimate the relation of this poetry to its own prose.³⁰

WILLIAM POTEAT: Yes, I wonder whether what Buber is doing is philosophy at all. What is I and Thou? A poem, like Rilke's Duino Elegies? A prayer, like Augustine's Confessions? A series of apothegms, like La Rochefoucauld's or Wittgenstein's Tractatus?³¹

RONALD HEPBURN: I and Thou certainly ensures that the language of prayer is given priority in theology over the language of reflection.³²

PAUL PFUETZE: Is the Existenz-thinker, trying to communicate his insights out of his particular I-Thou relation, reduced to sheer autobiographical utterance?³³

WALTER KAUFMANN: Is it more important to you to bear witness to an experience and to exhort men than to clarify concepts or to develop speculative theories? If so, of what traditional philosophers would you say the same?³⁴

MARTIN BUBER: I am convinced that it has been for all the philosophers whom I love and respect, as for me, that the sharing of my experiences and insights, the bringing of them into the world common to all, has had to be a philosophical one in which the unique is made a universal.³⁵

I must philosophize; there is no other way to my goal, but my goal itself cannot be grasped philosophically.³⁶

To bear witness to an experience is my basic intention, but I am not primarily concerned with exhorting men; rather, with showing that experience to be one accessible to all in some measure, in some form. In this I do not feel myself far either from the Platonic dialogues or from Descartes' Discours de la Methode.³⁷

WALTER BLUMENFELD: Yet I should say that your method doesn't really differ essentially from psychological introspection and retrospection.³⁸

MARTIN BUBER: I do not know exactly what is understood here by "my method", but I will gladly try to speak of the essential difference between the methods of the psychologist and of the philosophical anthropologist. The psychologist not only risks transforming the psychic process through self-observation but also shrinks events to their psychic sides. The anthropologist who is concerned with the whole body-soul man renews in reflection the memory of what happened to him in a certain life-context from "within" and from "without" and also grasps the remembered share of other men in the common situations. Such integrative making-present of human existence reflects the recognition that man becomes man in the presence of the other.³⁹

F. H. HEINEMANN: Do you believe that the dialogical principle could be the basis of a philosophy in the way that the axioms, "Being is" or "Cogito, ergo sum", were the first principles of Greek or modern philosophy?⁴⁰

MARTIN BUBER: It has not been my intention to give a basis for philosophy in this sense and cannot be, although I cannot foresee what may yet come of it in other hands. I call my philosophy "dialogical philosophy" with a certain irony.....⁴¹

E. laB. CHERBONNIER: I wonder still, however, whether this is philosophy at all. The hallmark of philosophic discourse, as distinct from bare assertion or arbitrary

insistence, is corrigibility. The philosopher acknowledges a criterion by which his mistakes might be corrected; but Your writings not only appear to lack such a criterion, but indeed to preclude it.⁴² The Socratic philosopher is corrigible; when he contradicts himself, he acknowledges that he has fallen into error.

MARTIN BUBER: Inner contradictions are no less possible here than in a Socratic philosophy; in no way do I reject the criterion of consistency.⁴³

RONALD HEPBURN: Are I-Thou encounters entirely self-authenticating or is there room here for error and illusion? If you don't allow for this, how can you defend yourself against the objection that they are only subjective projections? Let me give you an example of a mistake we can make about encounters with another person:

Something John tells me one day about himself, or something I see him do, convinces me I have never really known his true personality. The kaleidoscope is suddenly reshuffled; my former impression of him, concrete and impossible to generalize about (like all good I-Thou instances) had in some way been fraught with illusion. What I believed was the Thou over against me, directly apprehended, has proved to be my (false) construction out of what John seemed to me to be.⁴⁴

MARTIN BUBER: Trusting a person doesn't mean that I will "find anything" but simply that this man - whatever he

does - for me remains the one in whom I put my trust. Of course, this is a paradox, but so is all real trust.⁴⁵

RONALD HEPBURN: It seems to me, still, that all human I-Thou encounters depend on some knowing about though they may not demand a detailed entertaining of that knowledge.⁴⁶

On the occasions when I sit opposite a friend and observe his gestures and expressions, I am neither looking at these as at so many objects, nor in the belief that his entire personal being consists in such overt actions, nor am I looking "through" these to the hidden personality, as I might look through a window concerned only with the view beyond. I admit that his inner life, like mine, is more than gestures, speech, smiles; but I doubt if we know what we are saying when we declare that personality and knowledge of personality are possible without these.⁴⁷

MARTIN BUBER: When I spoke of the tree I said that no kind of knowledge of the tree was left behind, not even its chemical constitution.⁴⁸

Of course, there is no "pure" dialogue in this sense. There is always a content, even one that could be formulated in general terms though when its authentic character as the concrete unique happening would be lost.⁴⁹

EMIL FACKENHEIM: There must be content just because it is not address in general that is meant but conversation in this situation.⁵⁰

EUGEN ROSENSTOCK-HUESSY: And must there not also always be names? Aren't I and Thou fictitious abbreviations for the real Pluri-aged, named, "nationalized", and century-bound real persons? To me pronouns are omissions.⁵¹

MARTIN BUBER: The opinion that the pronouns stand for a name appears to me an error induced by grammar. I regard the proper name simply as an indispensable and unsatisfactory symbol of personal uniqueness. I use the personal pronouns to point to the relation that cannot be expressed in any other way.⁵²

RONALD HEPBURN: Yet I would have said that Buber's Thou is actually not always pronomial after all. He gives an illusion of immediacy through oscillating between descriptive and proper-name uses of the word God and thereby implies an identity between the Thou of the immediate encounter and the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob which he has no legitimate way of establishing.⁵³

MARTIN BUBER: I will use a gauche comparison, since I know no right one.

When we really understands a poem, all we know of the poet is what we learn of him in the poem - no biographical wisdom is of value for the pure understanding of what is to be understood: the I which approaches us is the subject of this single poem. But when we read other poems by the same poet in the same true way their subjects combine in all their multiplicity, completing and confirming

one another, to form the one polyphony of the person's existence.⁵⁴

FRITZ KAUFMANN: For Buber monotheism really means remembrance. God is always the God of this hour and always remains the coming God, who yet wants to be recognized as the same.⁵⁵

KARL BARTH: For me the omission of names is a sign of the omission of the name. I wonder whether outside the knowledge of divine grace and the man Jesus, that is apart from Christology, you can really complete your recognition that man as such and radically is not without but with the fellowman, that his humanity at its deepest and highest level consists in the freedom of his heart for the other. Can you follow us to the final and decisive consequences of this conception, to the "gladly" of this freedom of the heart between man and man?⁵⁶

MARTIN BUBER: I would I could show Karl Barth how the Hasidim dance the freedom of the heart to the fellowman.⁵⁷

HELMUT KUHN: To live in love requires a third and no one knows that better than Martin Buber.⁵⁸

FRANZ HAMMERSTEIN: Yet Buber writes I and Thou as though his understanding of man were separable from a particular faith event, as though the background of the Judaic prophetic faith were not necessary. Is the foundation of his philosophy revelation or human understanding? Does

he believe one can know and realize the dialogic life without the historical revelation?⁵⁹

MARTIN BUBER: For me the Bible and Hasidism have been the starkest witnesses to the primacy of dialogue and for me their witness has been the divining rod which led me to the source, but the source itself can be nothing but the faith experience delivered to me.⁶⁰

JAMES BROWN: A little while ago you mentioned that tree again. How can we know in such experiences whether the aspect of things as Thou is projection from Man's side, the result of his "attitude" to them, or represents a real feature of their nature? This question of the justification of the extension of the I-Thou relation to the realm of things, as also to the eternal Thou, seems to me fundamental.⁶¹

RONALD HEPBURN: How do you establish the analogy between meeting people and meeting God?⁶²

KARL JASPERS: Yes, to me, also, this extension has always seemed illegitimate.⁶³

JAMES BROWN: Especially since you want to claim that this language is not metaphorical.⁶⁴

CHORUS: Strophe: They have won.

Antistrophe: But, unfortunately, only in metaphor.

Strophe: No, in reality; in metaphor they have lost.⁶⁵

EMIL FACKENHEIM: Buber, I would like to turn once more to the question of whether I and Thou has metaphysical or epistemological significance or whether it is only a sermon that calls. Does I and Thou fall into the category of I-It communication? You have spoken of yourself as a philosopher and you have also spoken of philosophy as I-It knowledge. I would understand your philosophizing as a critique of I-It knowledge in the Kantian sense of a philosophy which brings us to the limit and points to the I-Thou realm.⁶⁶

MARTIN BUBER: In order to insert what I have experienced into my thought on being at the place that belongs to it and in order to communicate it to others, I am, according to my understanding, directed to conceptuality, dialectic, reason.⁶⁷

Any knowledge of I-Thou must come into the realm of It in the same sense any work of art does.⁶⁸

CHORUS: Without its guardians a work of art is just an object among other objects.⁶⁹

Notes for Chapter Five:

1. Between Man and Man, p. 7.
2. From a note on a poem by Judah ha-Levi written by Franz Rosenzweig and included in Glatzer, Nahum H., Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought, Schocken Books, New York, 1961, p. 279.
3. From a poem by Holderlin quoted in Heidegger, Existence and Being, p. 270.
4. Buber, Werke, Vol. 1, p. 296.
5. Glatzer, op. cit., p. 199.
6. From the 1931 edition of Glaube und Denken, quoted in Between Man and Man, p. 148.
7. Tillich, Paul, Theology of Culture, Oxford University Press, New York, 1959, p. 191.
8. Schillp and Friedman, op. cit., p. 35.
9. Ibid., p. 571 and Between Man and Man, p. 148.
10. Between Man and Man, p. 34, 27.
11. Ibid., p. 27.
12. Werke, Vol. 1., p. 293.
13. I and Thou, p. 96 and Sydney and Beatrice Rome, editors, Philosophical Interrogations, Holt, Rinhart and Winston, New York, 1964, p. 21.
14. Werke, Vol. 1., p. 298.
15. Ibid., p. 294.
16. Ibid., p. 294, 295; Between Man and Man, p. 52.
17. Schillp and Friedman, op. cit., p. 97, 100, 105.
18. Ossterreicher, John M., ed. The Bridge, Vol. III, p. 187. Pantheon Books, New York, 1958.
19. Rome, op. cit., p. 57.
20. Schillp and Friedman, op. cit., p. 602.
21. Rome, op. cit., p. 21.

22. Schillp and Friedman, op. cit., p. 109 ff.
23. Ibid., p. 90 ff.
24. Between Man and Man, p. 34.
25. Schillp and Friedman, op. cit., p. 293.
26. Ibid., p. 594, 598.
27. Ibid., p. 604.
28. Ibid., p. 189.
29. Ibid., p. 592.
30. Brown, James, Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Buber and Barth, Collier Books, New York, 1962, p. 103.
31. Rome op. cit., p. 51.
32. Hepburn, Ronald W., Christianity and Paradox, Watts, London, 1958, p. 30.
33. Rome, op. cit., p. 95.
34. Ibid., p. 16.
35. Schillp and Friedman, op. cit., p. 589.
36. Rome, op. cit., p. 17.
37. Ibid., p. 18.
38. Ibid., p. 58.
39. Ibid., p. 59.
40. Ibid., p. 22.
41. Ibid., p. 23.
42. Ibid., p. 50.
43. Ibid., p. 51
44. Hepburn, op. cit., p. 30, 35.
45. Schillp and Friedman, op. cit., p. 621.
46. Hepburn, op. cit., p. 48.
47. Ibid., p. 36

48. I and Thou, p. 7, 8.
49. Schillp and Friedman, op cit., p. 595.
50. Ibid., p. 256.
51. Rome, op. cit., p. 32.
52. Ibid., p. 34.
53. Hepburn, op. cit., p. 57.
54. Between Man and Man, p. 15.
55. Schillp and Friedman, op. cit., p. 195
56. Barth, Karl, Church Dogmatics, III, 2,
T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1960, p. 277, 278.
57. Werke, Vol. 1., p. 305.
58. Schillp and Friedman, op. cit., p. 567.
59. Hammerstein, Franz, Das Messiasproblem bei Martin Buber,
Kohlhammer Verlag, Stuttgart, 1958, p. 67, 46.
60. Schillp and Friedman, op. cit., p. 638.
61. Brown, op. cit., p. 113.
62. Hepburn, op. cit., p. 30.
63. Jaspers, Karl, Truth and Symbol, Twayne Publishers,
New York, 1959, p. 41.
64. Brown, op. cit., p. 111.
65. Kafka, Franz, Parables and Paradoxes, Schocken Books,
New York, 1963, p. 11.
66. Schillp and Friedman, op. cit., p. 259, 260.
67. Rome, op. cit., p. 47.
68. Schillp and Friedman, op. cit., p. 591
69. Jaeger, Hans, op. cit., p. 424.

Chapter Six

Theology as Translation.

An example:

Psalm 23, Luther's translation:¹

Der Herr ist mein Hirte, mir wird nichts mangeln.
Er weidet mich auf einer grünen Aue und führet
zum frischen Wasser.
Er erquicket meine Seele, er führet mich auf
rechter Strasse um seines Namens willen.
Und ob ich schon wanderte in finstern Tal, fürchte
ich kein Unglück; denn du bist bei mir, dein
Stab und Stab trösten mich.
Du bereitest vor mir einen Tisch im Angesicht
meiner Feinde, du salbest mein Haupt mit Öl
und schenkest mir voll ein.
Gutes und Barmherzigkeit werden mir folgen mein
Leben lang, und ich werde bleiben in Hause
das Herrn immerdar.

Psalm 23, Buber's translation:²

1. ER ist mein Hirt
2. mir mangelts nicht.
3. Auf Grastriften
4. lagert er mich,
5. zu Wassern der Ruh
6. führt er mich.
7. Die Seele mir
8. bringt er zurück,
9. er leitet mich
10. in wahrhaftigen Gleisen
11. um seines Namens willen.
12. Auch wenn ich gehn muss
13. durch Todschattenschlucht
14. fürchte ich nicht Böses,
15. denn du bist bei mir,
16. dein Stab, deine Stütze,
17. die trösten mich.
18. Du rüstest den Tisch mir
19. meinen Drängern zugegen,
20. streichst das Haupt mir mit Öl
21. mein Kelch ist Genügen.
22. Nur Gutes und Holdes
23. verfolgen mich nun
24. all Tage meines Lebens,
25. ich kehre zurück
26. zu DEINEM Haus
27. für die Länge der Tage.

A commentary:

Note the elimination of archaisms; the rephrasing in kolas, units of meaning adjusted to the rhythm of human breathing.

1. The name of God is here expressed by the pronomial "He".
2. Substitution of present tense for a future not found in the Hebrew.
3. Replacing of "poetic" Aue with Triften.
4. He "camps" me rather than just "leads" me.
5. "Waters of rest" is closer to the Hebrew significance.
6. No "and" in the Hebrew; both Luther and Buber convey the Hebrew Parallelisms.
8. "Revives my soul" suggests a supernaturalism which "brings back my life to me" seeks to avoid.
9. To use führen both here and in v. 6 would suggest the same Hebrew word recurs.
10. "Strasse" has the wrong connotations; Buber makes a point of matching words associated with "recht" and with "wahr" consistently with the Hebrew "mischpat" and "zedek".
13. "Todschattenschlucht", a word coined to suggest not a place but the experience of death-shadow-abyss.
14. Not "Unglück" but something much more positive: "Böses".
19. Those who oppose me, stand over against me.
20. "Touch" not the more liturgical "anoint".
22. "Holdes": Buber's consistent translation of "hesed".
25. Not "remain" but "return".
27. Not "forever" but as in the RSV "as long as I live".

In a collection of essays which comprises a backward glance at a decade's devotion to translating the scriptures and so represents the kind of re-gathering movement which seems so much a part of his way, Buber says that even before the war he had vaguely thought of translating the Jewish Bible into German, but that it was only in the next decade that this came to "ripeness" in him. Here again "ripeness" means the way of doing, a clarification of method. In a sense it was I and Thou itself which led him to this new project for he discovered that his vision of human life as response, and as a response within which denial was included, was the Biblical vision. When he saw this, truly saw it, he learned for the first time what kind of book the Old Testament is, why it, despite everything, demands to be brought newly into the present human world, newly in the sense of having its originality renewed; he learned why and how.³

Also, it was the publication of I and Thou which led to the friendship with Franz Rosenzweig, who, though almost completely paralyzed with sclerosis, nevertheless worked with Buber on the scripture translation until his death in 1929. Rosenzweig was the author of Star of Redemption, a book which grew out of an experiencing of the war very similar to Buber's and which expressed a vision very close to that which lies behind I and Thou.

In a tribute written shortly after Rosenzweig's death, Buber wrote:

The catastrophes of historical reality are often at the same time crises of the human relation to reality. Of the special manner in which our time has experienced this crisis I know of no greater or clearer example than that of Franz Rosenzweig..... Such crisis.....shatters our familiar manner of orienting ourselves and compels us to withstand with our knowledge and our lives, a reality stripped of orientation, a reality that threatens us with the horror of meaninglessness.⁴

In Rosenzweig the crisis can be seen as the way from one book to another, from a monograph on Hegelian political philosophy to the Star of Redemption which is not just a philosophizing about concrete existence, but one "that avails itself of the philosopher's concrete existence", as we saw Buber himself more and more finding it necessary to do. Rosenzweig brings together philosophy's proclamation of the reality of "world" and theology's insistence on the concrete uniqueness of persons. He shows the irreducibility of God, man, and world and then narrates their relation:

Rosenzweig is not discoursing about views of God, man, and world; he is speaking directly about God, man, and world; indeed one might.... say that he speaks between them as an interpreter speaks.....Rosenzweig, on the basis of a belief, discusses all things.....in such a way that.....he serves the things he discusses⁵

In Rosenzweig's "New Thinking" the method of speech replaces the method of thinking maintained in all earlier philosophies:

Speech is bound to time and nourished by time, and it neither seeks nor wants to abandon this element. It does not know in advance just where it will end. It takes its cues from others.....(who have) not merely ears.....but also a mouth.⁶

Their books brought them together; during 1923 they often talked about Rosenzweig's translation of Judah-ha-Levi's poetry from Hebrew into German. Sometimes the talk would turn to consideration of the problems of translating in general and then gradually, at first in the background but soon to the fore of such discussions as their magnetic center, was the question: Is the Bible translatable? Has it been truly translated? How much remains to be done? And, especially, how can it be done? As a revision of Luther or as a completely fresh project?

Then came a sign. From a publisher: "You, and a genuinely new translation". Buber went to Rosenzweig and told him that he accepted, contingent on his friend's collaboration. Rosenzweig, who had given up measuring his life in long periods, was both pleased and disturbed. "It meant adopting a different calculus of the future. He said, 'Let's try it.' 'Which chapter?', I asked. He replied: 'The first!'"⁷ And so they began, and we read with poignancy in Rosenzweig's letters and diaries during these, his last years, of one book after another being brought to completion. Buber would make a draft and include with it all the earlier versions, the relevant scholarly material, and his reasons for each decision. Rosenzweig would study these

during the week and then each Wednesday they would confer, though of course Rosenzweig could no longer speak or write, but only indicate by means of an apparatus which slight arm movements could set in motion. Yet how truly this was a venture in collaboration is discovered as one finds it necessary to move back and forth between what each has written in order to learn about and then convey its aims and methods. To read the notes about the work in progress that passed between them is to see what theology as conversation might mean.

Their aim was to renew the Bible's originality, to save the strength of the origin for further present existence.⁸ "Only to approve, conserve, just to want to carry the word through time is blasphemous, for it wants to talk to and in every time."⁹ In an address on Judaism dating from the early '30s Buber said:

A generation can only receive the teachings in the sense that it renews them. We do not take unless we also give. Our Jewish collective memory, transmitted from father to son, is the very origin of our characteristic history. For the core of this history does not consist of a sequence of objective events but of a sequence of essential attitudes toward such events and these attitudes are the product of a collective memory.¹⁰

For Buber this translation of the Hebrew scriptures became a many-yearred living-over-against, almost forty years; it was not until almost half way through those forty years that Buber turned from translating to the other more interpretive kind of retelling represented by Moses and

The Prophetic Faith. The work of translation begun with Rosenzweig and continued for some time after his death is taken up again years later, after the war in Israel, when another publisher comes and says: "Finish". Buber, in recalling this, says, "I remembered then my grandmother's words: 'One doesn't know ahead of time what an angel looks like'." 11

In the turning to the Bible represented by the work of translation, Buber for the first time approaches doing theology in the conventional sense of explicating scripture, though he is, to begin with, hardly conscious of the theological implications of his interpretation and remains very sensitive on this point, on the responsibility of his translation. Yet the essays on the work of translation indicate how unquestionably "theological" were the grounds of decision as to how certain words were to be translated. This is also made clear in the discussion of just which words were the most difficult to find German equivalents for, and which renderings seemed most in need of defense.

Even in the early writings Buber had been trying to bring the intuition of God into the realm of words but the experience itself had not then seemed to him a word-event, but image and silence and the self's meeting with the Ground of the Self. In his translations and interpretations of mysticism, first Christian and oriental and then Hasidic, he had understood the movement as one from the non-verbal

to the verbal; the aim had been to shape a word-image, so the stories come to their rounded shape, a timeless art modelled more on eye than ear. In I and Thou Buber came more and more to sense the mystery of language and to recognize a much deeper relation between form and content, since both are word-events. There his intuition is itself verbal, that kernel phrase I-Thou from which the whole slowly grows. Word-events happen not within the self but between men. Buber says that while he was writing I and Thou he came to appreciate Goethe's insight that the word had been so important in early human generations because it was a spoken word.¹² The word which passes between men and which misses and is misunderstood is the word which brings one to God: you don't leave the realm where missing takes place behind. This discovery of Buber's that the very missing between men points to God, as in the experience with the young man, suggests K's quest in Kafka's novel for the relation between village and castle. Franz Rosenzweig in a letter of 1927 expresses the relevance of this association:

The people who wrote the Bible seem to have thought of God much the way Kafka did. I have never read a book that reminded me so much of the Bible as his novel The Castle, and that is why reading it certainly cannot be called a pleasure.¹³

Here it is a word already there, the Scripture, which is again to be brought "to word", to speaking-ness, so that it can be heard again. It is there to be responsible to, even more clearly than the unformed intuition confronting

the artist. The translator's role here is to continue the work of the Old Testament nabi who brings to word what is already word so that his hearers may translate it into reality. It is because the translator has found himself addressed here that he seeks to bring the Bible and us together.¹⁴ "At its highest a translation comes into existence in the same way as a work of original literature: a man experiences something - in this case a foreign text - which he has got to find words for if he is to have any peace."¹⁵

Buber says that the significance of the Old Testament lies in its binding of spirit and world:

In the "Old Testament" both events and words are placed in the midst of the people, of history, of the world. What happens does not happen in a vacuum existing between God and the individual. The Word travels by way of the individual to the people, so that they may hear and translate it into reality. What happens is not superior to the history of the people; it is nothing but the secret of the people's history made manifest.¹⁶

What the "translator" seeks to do is to bring this word to us so that we will recognize it as one that addresses us, understand this history as one which includes us, so that we will hear "through the words of the Bible the voice which from earliest beginnings has been speaking in the direction of the goal; so that we experience it as revelation."¹⁷ As we shall see, this really demands a "secularization" of the Bible, freeing it from its pietistic and theological overcoatings so that it confronts us with its own otherness.

This alien quality must be so set forth as to preclude our being able to "use" it for "orientation"; it is not to be dissolved.

In the essay just cited Buber speaks from his own experience of how the way into the Bible may be an event from our own lives. It is events that open us to the eventfulness of the Bible's words. It is perhaps only thus that we really come to a sense of being included in this history so that we recognize its origin and goal as our own:

Sometimes we have a personal experience related to those recorded as revelations and capable of opening the way to them. . . . The attempt to derive such an apperception from the famous unconscious stems from the widespread superstition that the soul can do everything by itself and it means. . . . what you have just experienced was always in you. . . . But what occurred to me was "otherness", was the touch of the other. . . . When we experience the giving, we find that revelation exists. And we set foot on the path which will reveal our life and the life of the world as a sign communication.¹⁸

It is on this path, Buber says, that we meet with "the major experience", that is, the one recorded in the Bible, which is of the same kind as our minor one. Rosenzweig says something very close to this:

For such a man the days of his own life illumine the Scripture and in their quality of humanness permit him to recognize what is more than human. . . . Not everything in the Scriptures belong to him - neither today nor ever. But he knows that he belongs to everything in them, and it is only this readiness of his which, when it is directed towards the Scriptures, constitutes belief.¹⁹

Creation and redemption, the recognition of origin and goal, are true "only on the premise that revelation is a present experience"²⁰ something that happens to us, calls us now to responsibility, only if there is transformation and not just change. This is the Bible's message, Buber says, but the question persists: "how can we mediate between this (i.e., "modern") man and the biblical message? Where is the bridge?"²¹ He answers that it can be done only by pointing you to your life:

by my asking you to recall your own dark and silent hours.....those hours in the lowest depths when our soul hovers over the frail trap door which may send us down to destruction.....But suddenly we feel the touch as of a hand.....it wishes to be grasped - and yet what incredible courage is needed to take the hand, to let it draw us up out of the darkness.²²

The bridge is the call to recollection, the word that "betweens" the events in your life and the revelatory events of the Bible.

For such an encounter with the Bible to take place it is necessary that we "read it as something entirely unfamiliar", as something new, and let whatever will happen between us and it.²³ Therefore in their translation Buber and Rosenzweig seek to bring into view precisely the strangeness of the Biblical outlook. They are like Søren Kierkegaard in trying to make difficult something that until now had seemed easy. This means not dissolving "the strangeness of biblical concepts".²⁴ The Bible's speaking, for example, of

God's coming down in fire to speak to his people is not just an allegory about a spiritual event nor a "supernatural" event, but the "verbal trace" of a natural event experienced as revelation and preserved as such by a spontaneously formative memory.²⁵ The Bible cannot be demythologized for living monotheism needs myth "as the specific form in which its central event can be kept safe and lastingly remembered." ²⁶ As Buber and Rosenzweig undertake their translating they discover how integrally the events and the forms of remembrance are related and how important it therefore is to reproduce the form.

But the two translators discover that reproducing the peculiar forms and the alien quality, when taken seriously, suggests an entirely new understanding of how the Bible is to be brought into German. It teaches them a new respect for the differences between languages as an expression of a different experiencing of order, a different way of being in the world. It seems clear that much of what Buber learns from translating the Bible he is open to because he is himself already a poet, deeply sensitive to language and to the oneness in words of form and content. Yet it is also apparent that he learns the basis of this oneness from just this task.

Buber's translations of Nachman's tales had been almost as free as Dante's "translation" of Vergil, what William Arrowsmith describes as a "literary" renewal which

renders an alien experience contemporary, which "struggles" a past greatness across time and space into its own culture and so turns it to life-giving advantage.²⁷ What Buber now finds it necessary to do appears at first glance much like what Arrowsmith calls the antiquarian's approach: bending and even distorting his own language into the shape of the original, motivated by a deep historical empathy, "directed more at the understanding of the past than the delight and illumination of the present."²⁸ But, of course, it is just this "more...then" that Buber questions, for it seems to Buber that it is only as itself, as "original" that the Bible can "illuminate our present".

Buber and Rosenzweig found that if one really has something new to say this will put a new demand on language, a demand for a made-up word like the childhood-coined "Vergegnung" with which Buber expressed the failed relationship with his mother, or like any metaphor. It is just this being at the limits of what can already be said in language which renews language. Therefore if the word of Scripture indeed has something new to say, to say it will necessarily put demands on German as it now stands. As Rosenzweig wrote in his essay, "The Function of Translation":

The creative aspect of translation can only manifest itself in the region of the creative aspect of speech itself....A language on which no demands are made by those who speak it stiffens into a mere means of communication that can be supplanted by any kind of Esperanto. Whoever has something to say, must say it in a new way. He will create his language, and

when he has said his say, the face of the language will have changed. The translator makes himself a mouthpiece for the alien voice and transmits it across the chasm of space or time. If this alien voice has something to communicate, the language will be different from what it was before.²⁹

So the translation of the Bible, its "Verdeutschung", will be at the same time a renewing and reshaping of German. Because Buber and Rosenzweig are so conscious of the translator's responsibility to transmit form as well as sense, we will find that literary critics will often be more helpful in our attempt to assess the aims of this translation than will Biblical scholars. For example, Roger Shattuck in an essay called "Artificial Horizon": Translator as Navigator" speaks of the translator's demands on the language he is translating into in a way that seems very relevant to Buber and Rosenzweig's conception of their task:

Far too little do we remember that the translator-navigator also offers a commentary on his native language seen from a new vantage-point; and far too rarely do we grant him the right to violate the rules of usage that it should be part of his function to push to the limit and if necessary overstep.³⁰

Buber says that to the proclamation of the prophet belong not only his symbols and parables but also the whole undercurrent of the Hebrew language, the way in which its words grow out of one another and in which its sentences are built. He says that to know this is to recognize the unfillability of the translator's task, for the unique is

precisely the unique, but "one must come as close to the limits of the language into which one translates as is permitted, and sometimes one must transgress."³¹ To quote Shattuck again:

In its truest role translation does not consist solely in reducing all foreign works to the limitations of, say, English, but equally in reshaping and enlarging English to reach meanings which it has not yet had to grapple with. As much as the work is translated into English, English should be translated to and around the work.³²

Rosenzweig proclaims the possibility of such a renewal of one language through another because there "is no trait in any one language which is not at least latent in any other." The possibility of translating is based on the "essential one-ness of all language and on the command springing from that oneness that there shall be communication among all men." The translator actualizes this possibility by "cultivating the fallows of his own language."³³ When Buber took up the translation again after the war he says that he still found it necessary to go to the limits of the German language but that he had learned to trust these limits more in the intervening years.³⁴

In Begegnung Buber speaks of a childhood game that he used to play with himself. It began with his trying to translate a word or phrase from one language to another; he would find it in the other language but would discover also that something had been lost. In the game he would

imaginatively create a dialogue between two who spoke different languages, perhaps German and French, or Hebrew and Latin, and thus experience the gap between what one said and what the other from his language's way of thinking could receive.³⁵ There is an example of such a gap in the English translation of Buber's "Report on Two Talks" which in German ends: "Wir wollen uns du sagen" and in English: "Let us be friends".³⁶ Once again, an abyss discovered long ago, and a game still to be played; a game which involves standing in the abyss, taking his stand between-ing the languages. For translation is now seen as a "between-ing", a word spoken between the two languages which bears the communication between them - not really either but their communion enacted, a metaphor; whereas before it had meant "making it mine", the old absorption idea. Now one confirms the otherness and seeks to communicate with it; here translation is intended to be recognized as translation.

The realization of this conception of translation in the Buber-Rosenzweig Bible led Helmut Kuhn to say that it is here that Buber comes to the full height of his mastery of language, not as narrator or philosopher but as creator.³⁷ Walter Kaufmann has stated that apart from the Buber Rosenzweig translation of the Hebrew Scriptures his own translations would be unthinkable. His editorial introduction to The Portable Nietzsche expresses his indebtedness to Buber not only for Buber's insistence on the importance of rendering key terms consistently and of

conveying the structural role of such Leitworte but also for Kaufmann's very conception of the translator's task:

Rather than flatten out Neitzsche's highly unusual German into stereotyped idioms, an effort has been made to preserve as much as possible of his cadences, even where they are awkwardly groping or overstrained. What is thus lost in smoothness is gained for the understanding of the development of his style and personality.³⁸

The translator is led to a deeper recognition that all speaking is a translating. Rosenzweig says:

Whoever speaks is translating his thoughts and not for the imaginary general "other" but for this particular other in front of him Everyone has his own language, or rather, everyone would have his own language.....if all speech were not really dialogue to begin with, and, hence, translation.³⁹

Translation is a speaking that bears this dialogue within it, embodies it. A great translation would be a hieros gamos, a holy wedding.

The insistence on the importance of recreating the form as well as the "content" of the Bible in their translation was based not on esthetic but on theological or, more properly, on Biblical grounds - on literary grounds in the sense that it is seen as demanded by the very character of the work being translated, on the Bible's own understanding of the significance of language and word, of word as event, particular event, that which happens.⁴⁰ In the Bible the Word is spoken in history; what happens between God and man happens in the time and space of everyday, a particular day.

It has a concrete form which is inseparable from its meaning which is never simply an "abstractable" meaning. It is not something one could also say otherwise; one can not say it otherwise without making it other.⁴¹ The God of the Bible is the God of Abraham and of Sinai, not an in-general God. Because the Bible presents this covenant of the absolute with the particular, the form, the shape, the particular, matter. The how and where are an integral part of the what. Buber says that earlier translators had drawn the "content" over into their own language without regard to its form, "as if from any message the how could harmlessly be separated from the what." The great translators have known that the Word of God belongs to all time but have failed to recognize or take seriously that its then-and-there-ness belongs to this all-time validity rather than minimizes it.⁴² Just as it is impossible to disentangle the objectively historical from the Bible, so also is it impossible to disentangle a Biblical meaning from the narrative.⁴³

Buber's conception of the relation between event and meaning is similar to T. S. Eliot's conception of the "objective correlative": "a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion" and appear as "artistically inevitable" because of "the complete adequacy of the external to the emotion".⁴⁴ Where Eliot is speaking of a formula for an emotion, Buber is speaking of a form for a revelation. In the Scriptures, Buber believes, the event and its meaning are so correlated

that the meaning can be fully objectified only through these events. Erich Voegelin, too, accepts just this as characterizing the Old Testament view, although he seems to look upon it as defect.

The universalist implications of the experience were never successfully explicated within Israelite history. The spiritual meaning of the exodus from civilization was well understood but nevertheless remained inseparable from the concrete Exodus from Egypt; the Kingdom of God could never quite separate from Canaan.⁴⁵

Voegelin goes on to show how in Israel the form actually creates the content, the past is incorporated into a stream of events that has its center of meaning in the historical present. The relation between event and meaning, though so close, is nevertheless highly paradoxical, and just this paradox is, as Buber points out, at the center of the Biblical message: meaningfulness is enclosed in denial and failure, failure which is not just a mask but the way, "a way that leads from disappointment to disappointment and beyond all disappointment."⁴⁶

The poet, says Owen Barfield, is the one who says through the metaphor, the form, only so;⁴⁷ the Bible, says Buber, says, through the event, through the world, only so. In fact, Barfield's analysis of the peculiarity of the Hebraic way of relating "the appearances" to the meaningful, fully confirms Buber's interpretation of the significance of Biblical forms. This means that in translating the Bible

the translator must echo the poet's "through the form only so". But Buber believes that the "stretching" of German, the un-common-izing of it, that their translation involves, would be a false late-romantic unfamiliarity if it sprang from esthetic or literary considerations, if it came from a taste for either archaisms or neologisms, rather than from the aim of furthering the text.⁴⁸ Judging from his "response to criticisms" at the end of the volume of essays about this project, it is the critiques of this translation as a romanticizing, Wagnerizing one, as one full of painterly charm, that most deeply "get to" Buber, because of course it is just this that it seems to him he has most obviously left behind. The real question, he replies, is whether we have gone forth only from the word that stands there or whether we have intermingled with it the music of our dreams.⁴⁹ Nevertheless in a sense, in Barfield's sense that whenever the selection and arrangement of words affects the meaning we are in the poetic realm,⁵⁰ this is a poetic translation.

Their respect for form leads Buber and Rosenzweig to insist in a "fundamental" sense on their reliance on the masoretic text, compared to which even the most tempting conjecture appears to them as willfulness, since there is no trustworthy way of going "behind" the text to an original source.⁵¹ This is like Barfield's demand that we take the Gospels as they stand; the reasons for dissecting them relate to idolatry.⁵² To translate the Old Testament is to translate what the redactor gave us in its become-whole-ness; to

try to discover what he meant by it, for it is his meaning through which the wholeness comes.⁵³ Again Voegelin agrees:

The multiple histories and versions were integrated by the postexilic redactors into a body of history with a meaning of its own.....The work of the redactors was not done in order to be disintegrated by modern historians into the meanings of the component parts.⁵⁴

The Bible demands to be read as one book so that none of its parts are locked in themselves, so that each illumines the rest, recalls the rest. It is the structure of the Bible, the arrangement of words and phrases, which creates this unity, an immanent one-ness which lies here and not in any abstracted "meaning".⁵⁵ The unity is a word-unity; the word bears its past and future history within it, so that Abraham and Moses and Isaiah in saying "Here I am" indicate their participation in a common history at its different stages. It is the language of "message" which pervades the Bible and creates this unity; this message is neither a content nor a tacked-on moral; it shapes yet without destroying the genres, without flattening out the difference between law and psalm, narrative and prophecy.⁵⁶

When Buber speaks of the Old Testament as a "palimpsest", a manuscript with two or three erasures underneath, and talks of returning us to the original, he does not mean a return to the "sources" in the Wellhausian sense, but simply an elimination of the theological conceptualities which lie like a superscripture between us and

the originating power of the text.⁵⁷ The relation between this Bible we commonly read and the true Bible may be likened to that between the "murdered" God and the true.⁵⁸

Buber wants to return to the Bible not only its speakingness but also its spokenness, its oral quality, for the written Bible is only the preserving form. The original spokenness is expressed in the Bible's way of presenting relations and marking stresses, alliterations and puns, for example, are not just esthetic embellishment but play a part in shaping the meaning and the unity of what is said. Buber's translation was written to be read with the mouth and heard with the ear, so that it, too, would have the form of address. The theological significance of this spokenness is perhaps most clear with respect to the Ten Commandments; their entire meaning is changed if they are "translated" from the language of personal imperative to the impersonal formulation of a third-person "must".⁵⁹ Their desire to reproduce the spoken quality led Buber and Rosenzweig to a line-length based on the human breath, not to blank verse but to phrases of meaning adjusted to the tempo and rhythm of the human speaking voice. When Buber explains: not different verse lengths but none, for this is the rhythm of press,⁶⁰ we recall Barfield's comment that every great poet returns from poetic diction to prose, to the spoken language.⁶¹

Buber seeks to recapture in German what R. P. Blackmur calls the "gesture" of the Hebrew language:

Gesture, in language, is the outward and dramatic play of inward and imaged meaning. It is that play of meaningfulness among words which cannot be defined in the formulas of the dictionary, but which is defined in their use together; gesture is that meaningfulness which is moving, in every sense of that word: what moves the words and what moves us.⁶²

This is what Buber means by paronomasia, the playing upon words which here expresses "the deep earnest of the word-world itself".⁶³ It includes much more than just the puns like "shaged" and "shoqed" of the words of encouragement addressed to Jeremiah (Jer. 1: 11,12), but embraces also alliteration and assonance, the repetition of words and phrases, and the relations between words which spring from a common root. Such gesture or play is what gives life to the language, its own particular life. It is in translating such gesture that the extension of the limits of the German language was demanded.

An ear for the etymological connections of words is an important aspect of catching this gestural movement. Philip Wheelwright observes that "words have poetic life only in so far as they condense their own history."⁶⁴ Buber says that when he began the translation he had already come to sense the necessity of turning from dictionary definitions to root meanings, for he saw that it was just in the different root relations between words that the uniqueness of a people's character was made visible. Yet during the translating-consultations it was Rosenzweig who turned out to be

most assiduous in finding German words which were free from misleading cultic and theological associations and which represented the original earth-rootedness.⁶⁵ James Mullenberg, in his appreciation of the Buber-Rosenzweig translation, questions whether this emphasis on folk etymology may not have been carried too far, whether enough attention has been paid to historical developments in the meaning of words. He doubts, for example, that even originally Israel thought of YHWH as meaning "He who is there" and is sure that for later generations it has quite lost this signification and become simple noun and name.⁶⁶ This leads us to raise a question which we will return to later. Does Buber's understanding of the Bible's form take enough account of the historical dimension? He sees the relation between form and event, but does he see the Bible as a history of forms?

Buber and Rosenzweig sought to eliminate the technically theological renditions which fail to indicate the kind of meaning the Hebrew words had in their original setting. So in translating the ruach of Genesis 1 they seek a word which will reproduce the original unity of the natural with spiritual which neither wind nor spirit does, for apart from this unity it is precisely the "spiritual" meaning that is falsified. They want to present the Bible's words as still living metaphor, not as calcified theological terminology. They decide on Braus Gottes, the breath of God.⁶⁷ There are other examples: the word usually translated altar meant at

first a place for slaughtering not a place of prayer, though Buber admits that here the movement toward a more conventionalized meaning can be seen taking place within the Old Testament itself.⁶⁸ Korban is usually translated as sacrifice which suggests renunciation and denial whereas the Hebrew points to a separation between two persons which one of them seeks to lessen. He seeks "to near" the other, so Buber translates korban as nahung, a near-ing. We are then not surprised to read in an essay of Buber's on sacramental existence that a sacrament is a binding.⁶⁹ In the same essay Buber speaks of the nabi as a "bearer of the word", as the mouth of God;⁷⁰ when he translates nabi he rejects prophet because of its misleading associations with soothsayer and foreteller. The nabi is not this but an announcer, a proclaimer; this gives the right sense of his essential relation to what he proclaims as simply to call him a speaker would not.⁷¹

It also seemed important to them to try to express in German the dynamic character of the Hebrew language, to replace some of Luther's abstract nouns with a present participle, a verb form which would convey activity. Therefore, for example, kodesh is translated not as the Holy but as the hallowing, since it refers not to a condition but an event.⁷² Moses before the thornbush is not on holy ground but on the ground of hallowing, of consecration. In the essay on sacramental existence, Buber writes that for the Jew there is no profane, only the not yet hallowed; the difference between

holy and profane is a temporal not an abstract static one.⁷³ Similarly, in an essay on "The Power of the Spirit" he says that where the pagan glorifies the "tellurian forces" which the Christian denies, the Jew seeks to transform them.⁷⁴ (Here Freud shows himself a true Jew.)

Not only single words have to be carefully translated, but also the relations between words; it is important that the same words, and words having a common root, be consistently translated with the same German equivalent, and that the same German word or root not be used for two words which in Hebrew are quite different as mischpat and zedek are, though one would never guess this if they are translated as Recht and Gericht. In Buber's translation the first, which has to do with setting-straight, is rendered by the Gericht-Recht family and zedek, true decision, with words related to Wahrheit, truth.

Buber discovered that recurrence of words having the same root, that puns and alliterations, were signs of the organizing principle of the Old Testament which consists of verbal repetition of this same kind but on a much broader scale, on a scale which unifies the whole. He came to believe that such gesture was not just a "formal" principle of unification but also the interpretive element.

In his essay on "Leitworte" in the Pentateuch⁷⁵ Buber gives some examples which show how following a word-root closely clarified, or perhaps even reveals to us for the

first time, the meaning of the text, how such repetition serves to present an interpretation without any need for breaking off the narrative recital for the sake of editorial comment. There is no interruption or disturbance of the art-form, yet there is a message which transcends it, though not as a meaning with an existence outside the text. There are no gaps in the telling, no room for commentary; the message places itself under the folktale's or epic's rule and care, without interposing rhetoric or lyric, for this leitwort rhythm is a genuinely epic rhythm. As example Buber traces the way in which the story of Jacob is unified through the repetition of words such as blessing, firstborn, birthright, betrayal, and name. In another essay he points to the interplay between man's lying words and God's word of truth in Psalm 12.⁷⁶ These examples illustrate how word repetitions hold together and at the same time subtly interpret a particular section of the Bible. Actually, however, as he makes clear in the later interpretive books, Buber considers the architectural repetitions which bind together the Bible as a whole of much greater significance.

A story like the one about Jacob shows how important it is, especially perhaps with the legends in Genesis but not only there (think of Hosea's or Isaiah's children), to translate names so that they are not just "counters" but meaningful descriptions. One wants to make it possible for the reader of the translation to recognize the significance of

Israel's geneology which enters the pre-historical realm with Shem, "the name", and from him goes back to Adam, "the man".⁷⁷

And, of course, when it comes to translating Biblical names, the name for God raises the most important question. In Eclipse of God, Buber writes of being asked:

"How can you bring yourself to say 'God' time after time? How can you expect that your readers will take the word in the sense in which you wish it to be taken? What word of human speech is so misused! When I hear the highest called 'God' it sometimes seems almost blasphemous."

"Yes", I said, "it is the most heavy-laden of all human words. Just for this reason I may not abandon it. Generations of men have laid the burden of their anxious lives upon this word and weighed it to the ground We cannot cleanse the word 'God' and we cannot make it whole; but, defiled and mutilated as it is, we can raise it from the ground and set it over an hour of great care."⁷⁸

Here God for Buber, as in that other conversation with the other old man, is a name for calling upon not for talking about. Buber and Rosenzweig search for a name that will "say" this for their translation, for a name that cannot be handled as nomenclature, for a name that will convey what God's eheyeh asher eheyeh to Moses conveyed, "I am the one who will be present to you but as I will to be present." They look for a name which will enable his creature to address but not to conjure him. It has to be a name - not just a meaning like Luther's Der Ewige or Der Heilige, the

Eternal or the Holy - but a name by which he can be addressed. They considered Der Daseinde or Der Gegenwartige but wanted somehow to include also the ever-new unforeseeable quality and so decided on the pronouns: "ICH" when God speaks of himself, "DU" when he is addressed and "ER" when he is spoken of.⁷⁹ So in their translation of the Bible the name for the eternal Thou is that pronoun which in I and Thou Buber already told us was not a metaphor.

Through this work of translation Buber is brought to an appreciation of the Biblical insistence on the inseparability of form and content, which will now send him to look for a Biblical hermeneutic that will express this inseparability. The focus on form has been given a theological rather than a "poetical" basis.

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Chapter Seven

The Prophetic Imagination.

A prophecy:

The Lord God has given me the tongue
of those who are taught,
that I may know how to sustain
with a word
him that is weary.
Morning by morning he wakens,
he wakens my ear
to hear as those who are taught.

Isaiah 50.4

Buber's work with the translation of the Bible led him to hope for a Jewish rebirth, for a "Hebrew humanism" in which the Bible would play the same decisive role as the classics had in the European renaissance. He wanted to bring the Biblical forms into the contemporary world as the basis of a reordering of Jewish communal life. His attentiveness to the pattern of the Bible's language had convinced Buber that the pattern of life, the image of man, is revealed through the language. The Bible could provide not just a description of ideal man but a human ordering "transmitted in a special sense through language", through the way of expression:

When a great man speaks, he need not tell us about his character in order to reveal it to us. Language itself takes care of that. No matter what he communicates to us, the language he used for that purpose expresses him and provides us access to him. Even language, per se, the characteristic branch of a language-group, the particular word-order and word formation, the rhythmic flow of vowels and consonants, are the product of a special human pattern. Humanism comprehends this pattern via language and takes it for a model. This means that as far as true humanistic understanding is concerned, literary tradition is not essentially a matter of esthetic appreciation or of historical learning or of patriotic pride.....It bears witness to man and reveals him.¹

Jewish humanism would mean a return to the Hebrew linguistic tradition, the Bible, and a search for what might be valid there for us as a human pattern to be translated into our

reality, not as a restoration of bygone forms but as "re-establishing the original foundation". However, and this for Buber was central, a Biblically-based humanism cannot mean only individual transformation but must also involve community, our life together.

This was the message which Buber's work of translating the Bible had brought to ripeness; it was suddenly a word spoken at a time and in a place where there was a people straining to hear it. During the 'thirties Buber came to recognize even more clearly than before that theology must direct its word to the concrete needs of the one addressed, must speak into a particular historical situation. The theologian's speaking, he learns, must model itself after the prophet's. Like the Old Testament prophets, Buber seeks for a way of conveying both demand and reassurance.

World War I marked the crisis, the turning-point, in Buber's own life; as he himself has said, I and Thou stands at the beginning; all else is only illustration and expansion. Yet Robert Weltsch, in his 1961 postscript to Hans Kohn's 1929 book on Buber, can speak of the stormy and changeful times that came to Germany in 1933 as providing the decisive turning in Buber's life because now Buber's word was truly received as a word to his time. The change lay not in what he had to say but in the importance that it had to the German Jews just then.² This period, after all, was the time when the factual existence of Judaism was at

stake. Weltsch puts this with dramatic force: "The European Judaism from which Buber came and to which he spoke no longer exists."³

In 1933 Buber immediately resigned his Frankfurt University position. Jews listened to his voice as never before. Their Judaism which had for many been an unimportant factor in their lives now became the decisive one, though this was something that had been forced upon them from outside. They were looking now for a "Jewish education", for just Buber's learning. Until it became completely impossible to do any talking or travelling, until he left Germany in 1938, Buber was the "recognized central personality" in this ingathering. "Without him this epoch is not to be imagined."⁴

In 1936 Buber published an essay, "The Question to the Single One", which "attacks the life-basis of totalitarianism"⁵ but which was allowed to be published because it appeared to be simply a discussion of Kierkegaard's conception of the solitariness of the authentic individual. Kierkegaard speaks of his renunciation of Regina as though she, and thus creation, were "a hurdle on the road to God" rather than recognizing that "the real God lets no shorter line reach him than each man's longest, which is the line embracing the world accessible to that man."⁶ Buber asks, "God as Regina's successful rival? Is that still God?"⁷ For Buber, unlike Kierkegaard, marriage is "the exemplary bond" which "brings one into an essential relation to the 'world'",⁸ to the

community, the body politic. Buber seeks to make clear that exclusive love of the Biblical God means inclusive love, love of the neighbor. He wants to show that faith means facing the biographical and historical hour which approaches one, "just as it is, in its whole world content and apparently senseless contradiction," and means answering for that hour as that which is entrusted to one.⁹ Kierkegaard's individualism provides no answer to the collectivistic threat. Faith, Buber believes, and this is part of his answer to the historical hour confronting him, demands historical responsibility.

In another essay he takes off from Nachman Krochmal's conception of Judaism's twofold task of disclosing the relativity of the gods of the nations and pointing to the true absolute who addresses us with a claim on us. Buber speaks here of how the Judaism of his day has done only the first. He mentions particularly the unmasking initiated by Marx and Freud. "In the course of the last century, the Jew in his capacity of critic has not by his shattering of idols made room for God, but has set out to rob God himself of any place on earth."¹⁰ Buber goes on to interpret the contemporary situation as one which might force the Jews themselves to realize how they have neglected the other aspect:

Up to now, our existence has only sufficed to shake the thrones of idols, not to erect a throne to God. It is that fact which makes our existence among the nations so mysterious. We pretend to teach the absolute, but what we actually do is say, No,

to the other nations, or rather we ourselves are such a negation and nothing more. That is why we have become a nightmare to the nations. That is why every nation is bound to desire to get rid of us at the time it is in the act of setting itself up as the absolute.¹¹

The attentiveness with which people listened to his words made Buber deeply aware that he had no teaching to give, only an outstretched hand, and returned him again to the question raised long ago by the memory of the zaddik in the midst of his congregation: What is true leadership? This questioning is expressed in an essay in which he compares the understandings of leadership represented by Plato and Isaiah. He speaks first of Plato who had been initiated into history through Socrates' condemnation for obeying his daimon even though he had sought to educate young Athenians for life in the polis. Plato looked upon the philosopher as the one given a vision of the perfect community who wants to establish it in the human world in the living form of a state. Yet when the opportunity came, Plato failed. Buber asks, "Was the failure only in 'reality' or also in the spirit's very relationship to truth?" In contrast to this philosophic image of leadership is the prophetic as represented by Isaiah. His role is to stand powerless over against the worldly power of the king; he knows from the outset that his service is not to be measured by success but by faithfulness; he is told that he will fail and that this failure is an integral part of the way he must take.

He had no idea, no institution, to establish; only a message which broke through the illusions of current history to proclaim. Buber wants to point to the "meaning Isaiah's teachings have for us", to show that though the prophetic spirit unlike the Platonic does not claim to possess a timeless ideal truth but only a message for a particular situation, Isaiah's "word still speaks after thousands of years to manifold situations in the history of peoples".¹² Particularly, Buber means to say, to our situation today. In this period Buber's exegesis is always directed as much to the illumination of the contemporary crisis as to the interpretation of the Biblical word. His central theme is the relevance of the Biblical message to the present circumstances.

Buber was now looked to as a zaddik, the leader of his generation. This was a time for speaking; the written fruits came mostly after the move to Palestine. That this, too, was part of his way is not at all to be forgotten. How you have been heard also matters, and also shapes how you yourself continue your speaking. As Weltsch notes this was probably the time in Buber's life most important for others. It must have mattered, too, that when he comes to Jerusalem, though he is highly respected, nobody really bothers to listen to him any more. But in Germany Buber was heard as a nabi and those years like the ones at the end of Ezekiel's career were a time for giving encouragement as well as for teaching, a time for saying, "Don't despair for that would be to rely still entirely on yourselves."

When Buber came to Jerusalem in 1938 he was appointed to a chair of sociology in the university because the Orthodox party did not want him involved with anything "religious". His inaugural address was entitled, "The Demand of the Spirit and Historical Reality", a title which would really apply to all of his writings during this period in which he tries to clarify the present situation and what he is called to witness to within it. He is convinced of the relevance of Biblical faith not only as a source of comfort and illumination but also as disclosing what is demanded from us. To speak only the reassuring word would be to become a false prophet, though Buber may have discovered like Isaiah that only the consoling words were heard. For Buber a crisis always implies the possibility of a spiritual turning, of tsuvah; this is true even when he is willing to put on the mask of the sociologist:

Modern sociology originates in the meeting of the spirit with the crisis of human society, which the spirit accepts as its own crisis and which it undertakes to overcome through a spiritual turning and transformation.¹³

That is, "If I am to be called a sociologist then being a sociologist must mean being one who recognizes a world in crisis and himself as standing with the world in crisis". "The crisis embraces them both together." Faced with such a situation the social thinking must ever again ask, "How can the spirit influence the transformation of social reality?"¹⁴ as Buber found himself asking during these years of turmoil.

In Jerusalem Buber discovers that the exile is not ended and that new Israel, too, must be spoken against and reminded of her purpose. For Buber the land of Palestine was truly bound up with the realization of Zion. As he wrote to Ghandi in 1939, for the Hebraic understanding the concrete can not just be spiritualized away and dissolved in "meaning";

Zion is the prophetic image of a promise to mankind, but it would be a vain metaphor if Mount Zion did not actually exist. This land is called "holy"; but this is not the holiness of an idea, it is the holiness of a piece of earth. That which is merely an idea and nothing more cannot become holy, but a piece of earth can become holy..... Decisive for us is not the promise of the land - but the commandment, the fulfillment of which is bound up with the land.¹⁵

Buber's writing now expresses his truly urgent sense that the world stands at a turning and that Israel stands with the world in that turning and has a special role, to make that turn, to make "the beginning" for which, as the Talmud says, the world was created. All that Buber had learned from the Bible and from the language of the Bible seemed needed to elucidate the meaning of the demands of this hour. He particularly wants to point his fellow Jews to their responsibility with respect to these demands, to make them recognize that election must mean more than simple existence, survival, success in the world-historical sense. Buber believes that here, too, the "how" is all-significant, for the how is no longer a purely esthetic criterion but means care for each detail, a care which reflects God's covenant with the concrete. Not to care about the how, about the hallowing of

the means, is, then, to blaspheme.¹⁶ The return to the soil is only metaphorical - only empty symbolism - if it is only literal. For Israel is not a nation like other nations, no matter how much its representatives may have wished it were during certain eras. Our election has not "the mythical shape of a people's wishful dreams"; it is completely a demand.¹⁷ The continued existence of the Jewish people has been a sign to the nations that God puts man under a command.¹⁸

Most of the writings of this period, so many of which appear as "inaugurals" marking the move to Jerusalem, are directly concerned with the destiny of the Jewish people, but in 1938 as his inaugural course of lectures of Hebrew University, Buber addresses himself to the more universal question "What is Man?"¹⁹ He seeks to show that man can be understood neither as a self-contained individual nor as a member of a crowd but only in terms of a threefold living relation to fellow man, world, and God.

The approach here is one quite different from anything of Buber's we have come across before and almost as significant as the conclusions. What we have here is a history of philosophy, though an unusual one. Buber approaches "the great philosophers" with a real question, the question about himself, and listens attentively to what they have to say to him. This is then quite different from Jaspers' seemingly similar project,²⁰ for Jaspers is primarily interested in what he can make of the philosophizing of the

past. The difference reflects that essential difference in the way each turns to the "Thou" which Buber remarked upon in his "Nachwort" to Das Dialogische Leben.²¹ For Jaspers the other is an essential part of any way to self-realization; for Buber my life with the other is reality.

Buber begins with an Hasidic anecdote:

Rabbi Bunam.....is said to have once addressed his pupils thus: "I wanted to write a book called Adam which would be about the whole man. But then I decided not to write it."²²

Buber decided not to write it either, so let us watch closely what he did write. He considers this inquiry to be a work in philosophical anthropology; the subject is man in his wholeness and so must take into account types and characters and stages. The investigator cannot ignore that he is "himself a man and experiences his humanity in his inner experience in a way that he simply cannot experience any part of nature." Everything that he discovers about historical and contemporary man "must be built up and crystallized round what the philosopher discovers by reflecting on himself", so that reflection becomes "an act of his life, without any prepared philosophical security". But this does not mean becoming an observer of his own life through a division of consciousness; he must be willing to let his anger rage "without trying to gain a perspective."²³ Rather, he must depend on memory and recollection, like great writers who

in their dealings with other men do not deliberately register their peculiarities and, so to speak, make invisible notes, but deal with them in a natural and uninhibited way, and leave the harvest to the hour of harvest.²⁴

Buber again suggests a parallel between his own way and the artist's way, but now it is the artist's way of being present and of remembering that seems most important. Like the artist, the philosophical anthropologist seeks to bring a personal past into the present so that it speaks to others of themselves. Buber seems to have become fully conscious of this as a way from finding himself taking it in "Dialogue". As we shall see Buber finds such creative recollection of their people's past shaping the composition of the Hebrews' scripture, too. The question is one which the philosopher asks and answers with all of his being and all his experience; the knowledge grows in his memory naturally not through a holding tight to the past but through its living presence.

Buber traces "the progress of the question", how it has been asked as a way of illuminating what he himself is now asking.

He indicates that the man who feels himself alone is the one most disposed to such self-reflection, the one who naturally becomes a question to himself, but also that this man is the one who cannot know the answer. He distinguishes between two kinds of epochs in man's spiritual history, times of habitation and times of homelessness;

only in the latter is the anthropological question, as something different from the cosmological, really raised. Buber uses this typology as the basis for his reading of the movement in philosophy from Aristotle's visual image of the universe to Kant's pointing to man as the maker of all world-images. Man is put in question when he cannot be understood as part of the world, when he knows himself as over against the universe. Pascal's solitude is deeper than Augustine's (and Einstein's deeper still) because he has experienced the death of images for the universe more radically. Here Buber includes a personal reminiscence in which he shows how this question and both Pascal's and Kant's responses to it were lived-through events for him:

When I was about fourteen years of age I myself experienced this in a way which has deeply influenced my whole life. A necessity I could not understand swept over me: I had to try again and again to imagine the edge of space, or its edgelessness, time with a beginning and an end or time without beginning or end, and both were equally impossible, equally hopeless - yet there seemed to be only the choice between one or the other absurdity Salvation came to the fifteen year old boy in a book, Kant's Prolegomena.....(which) showed me that space and time are only the forms in which my human view of what is necessarily works itself out.....Kant's answer to Pascal may be formulated after this fashion: what approaches you out of the world, hostile and terrifying, the mystery of space and time, is the mystery of your own comprehension of the world and the mystery of your own being. Your question What is man? is thus a genuine question to which you must seek the answer.²⁵

Buber understands this answer of Kant's to be the beginning of our age, the anthropological age which recognizes

the mystery of our comprehension of the world as the mystery of our own being. Buber then moves forward to a consideration of Hegel and Marx and their attempts to erect an intellectual image of the universe built on time rather than space. Such an image, he discovers, cannot give man the same feeling of being securely at home because anthropological time, lived rather than thought time, cannot be comprehended. The future cannot be present and so we can take no hope from Hegel's purely speculative securing of the future. Buber turns also to Feuerbach and to Nietzsche, again indicating the profound influence each had on him in his youth. He notes especially to Feuerbach's starting from the concrete situation of the philosophizing man and Nietzsche's recognition of the questionableness of man, of man as unfinished, as a way, a bridge, a promise, but he speaks also of Nietzsche's neglect of the central thing, the man who knows a world, man with man, community.

"Section Two" is called "Modern Attempts" and here Buber speaks of our situation in which not only cosmological but also sociological security has been shattered. Now, first Husserl and Kierkegaard, then Heidegger and Scheler, are brought before us. Kierkegaard's is a theological anthropology; he makes the binding to God a necessary aspect of man's being. For Heidegger, God is dead and so "apparently nothing more remains now to the solitary man but to seek intimate communion with himself." 26

Then Buber presents his own response to the question, a response which he has prepared by clarifying for us the situation into which his word is spoken and at the same time the path which he himself has gone in coming to this answer:

When the man who has become solitary can no longer say "Thou" to the "dead" known God, everything depends on whether he can still say it to the living unknown God by saying "thou" with all his being to another living and known man.²⁷

For man cannot become whole in relation to himself but only in virtue of a relationship to another. This leads Buber to speak of man's way of relating, his "different and new way of turning to things and living beings,"²⁸ and so to word. For what is man but the impulse to word, and so to community:

The fundamental fact of human existence is man with man. What is peculiarly characteristic of the human world is above all that something takes place between one being and another the like of which can be found nowhere in nature. Language is only a sign and a means for it.....It is rooted in one being turning to another as another, as this particular other being, in order to communicate with it in a sphere which is common to them but which reaches out beyond the special sphere of each. I call this sphere.....the sphere of "the between".²⁹

For Buber it is more accurate to speak of man as a word-speaker than as a symbol-maker. The word is spoken in "the between"; it means address and response. Man is the being who finds himself addressed and response-able. Although this

in an essay in philosophical anthropology, the understanding of man and word which Buber expresses here, clearly owes much to his reading of the Bible.

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In the course of their work of translating the Bible, Buber and Rosenzweig had often spoken of Buber's someday writing a systematic commentary to the Old Testament to be called The Biblical Faith. Buber reports that he worked at this project for about a year after Rosenzweig's death but quickly discovered the utter enormity of the undertaking. This was not really his way of going about it now would such a comprehensive commentary do justice to the very questions which for him were most central. He then decided on a different way of proceeding which was much more compact and yet which would include the themes and developments he had intended to emphasize. He projected a three volumed work, Das Kommende, which would center upon Israel's images of hope, the forms of her expectation. The first volume, Königtum Gottes, appeared in 1932, but then the Nazis and the war delayed the completion of the rest. Parts of the second volume appeared in journals as essays and were brought together for the first time in the 1964 Werke. The project as such was put aside, but during the war years Buber put together in Jerusalem a series of books through which he really fulfilled his central aim. These books focus on what had already long before become for him the three central

moments of the Biblical narrative; Moses by the thornbush, Second Isaiah and the arrows hidden in the quiver, Jesus my brother.

In considering these books I shall order the discussion as though they together comprise a Biblical commentary rather than in the order of publication dates. My way, then, will really be that suggested in The Prophetic Faith though I shall use the other books and essays as well. Buber begins there with what can be agreed on as authoritatively early expressions of Israel's faith and then goes back step by step to find the earliest stage at which we can assume the existence of a faith with these characteristics. In this way, Buber seeks to uncover a sense both of the formation and of the nature of this teaching, much as we have been trying to do throughout. He wants to show how the essential core develops until it becomes the complete teaching of the prophets,³⁰ and succeeds, James Muilenberg believes, in speaking to Christians of what the Old Testament really says, in showing the word's way through history.³¹

There will be another change in my approach here which again reflects a difference in Buber's own way of proceeding. I expect to include the criticisms and questions raised by other scholars in my consideration of Buber's tests, since Buber seems to invite such comparisons here. Yet here, as elsewhere, what seems most important is the suggestion of method, of a hermeneutics which grows out

of an attentive reading of the Old Testament itself and which focuses on structural metaphors. We shall also note in these Biblical commentaries that the relevance of scholarship to self-understanding never quite drops out of view. This is at the same time perhaps the greatest strength and greatest weakness of Buber's interpretation of the Bible, for other scholars sometimes complain that his dialogical philosophy leads him to miss the significance of some aspects of the Biblical message. We shall want to take note of what Buber contributes to our understanding of the Biblical imagination, and also, how his study of the Bible informs his own conception of theological method.

One of the things we note immediately in these books of Buber's is the presence of footnotes, mostly because they are so lacking elsewhere. This suggests that this kind of writing is done within the context of scholarly responsibility and discussion, that it takes place within the theologians' community. For instance, in the second foreword to Königtum Gottes, Buber defends his interpretation of the Sinai covenant as setting Yahweh over Israel as king against Caspari, von Rad and Yeheskiel Kaufman.³² He insists that God's leadership is to be understood as a rulership and that such divine ruling excludes a human king. It is only the failure of this way that leads on toward a human king anointed by God who because of this anointing fulfills a role which as such is not protested against by the prophets, although the failure of actual kings to live by this anointing

turns the prophets toward messianic images of a king who will. In the third foreword and in the text, Buber criticizes the Scandinavians such as Engnell and Mowinckle who equate Israelite kingship with Babylonian and Semitic parallels and stress the significance in Israelite life of mythological festivals, especially New Year rites. Here Buber is using the discussion with other scholars to make more plain his own view. In these books, in dedications and prefaces, Buber also expresses his gratitude to other scholars, "to those who have helped me read the Scriptures", to Rang and Rosenzweig, to Bultmann, Schweitzer, Rudolf Otto and Leonard Ragaz.

In the foreword to Good and Evil Buber speaks of two different methods and purposes which Biblical interpretation may assume; one which is primarily stylistic focuses on how an insight is expressed, the other, more existential one, shows the correspondence of the Biblical image to our own biographical situation.³³ Although in the books we shall now be considering the relevance to our time is never completely bracketed out, the focus is on the clarification of the Biblical word itself. All these Biblical commentaries follow I and Thou and the translation of Scripture, so all come after what Buber regards as his decisive breakthrough. By looking at the kind of speaking about the Bible which he here finds appropriate, we can try to see what this implies about Buber's understanding of the kind of word-event which the Bible itself is, and how this relates to his own word-speaking.

Like Walther Eichrodt, Buber seeks a way of presenting Old Testament theology which would pay heed to Scripture's own ordering of language and shaping of content. As we saw in considering Buber's defense of his Biblical translation, he believes that such care for Biblical forms is based not on esthetic grounds but on Scripture's own recognition of word as event and of the unseparability of event and meaning. Like Eichrodt, Buber orders his interpretation by using a central category which grows out of the Bible's own language. Buber uses not "covenant" but "Kingship of God" (later nabi seems to replace this as the central theme) within an even broader context of messianism. He is choosing a leit-wort which operates formatively throughout the Old Testament; by tracing its history he hopes to make visible the unity of the Old Testament. The historical development represents the "earning of the insight"; the continual re-interpretation of the metaphor is that through which complexity, irony, and depth are achieved. So central is this motif that Franz Hammerstein can use it as the methodological key which gives him access to the whole of Buber's writing.³⁴ Buber traces a three-staged unfolding movement beginning with the naive hope of an actual historical embodiment in a community of the unmediated kingship of God. This hope is then transferred onto a human kingship with divine anointing, and at last transformed into eschatology. Buber wanted to uncover the relationship between the rise of eschatology and a growing disillusion about historical possibilities.

The focus here is on hope's turning from the historical to the mythical realm. Buber suggests that myth is not only the form of remembrance but also the form of expectation. "Myth is the spontaneous and rightful speech of expecting and remembering."³⁵ But as he also insists with respect to myth's relation to the past, Buber wants to say here that the mythic images of the future embody a vision born of human experience: in Israel hope is always related to memory. The introduction to Konigtum Gottes, makes clear that Buber recognizes apocalyptic as a natural development of Israel's prophetic faith, though he will later show why he considers it a mistaken one.



Buber begins, however, with mythic images of the past, with the story of Abraham, the first point in the Biblical narrative where the question of historicity arises.³⁶ In The Prophetic Faith, Buber includes Abraham as a nabi, as one who acts as translator between God and his people, who intercedes as Abraham did for those in Sodom and Gomorrah.³⁷ No age in Israel's history, he believes, not even this early one, "can be understood historically without considering as active therein this species of man" whether or not the term itself was yet in existence. Buber believes that such a person is to be found at every landmark in Israel's history and what he focuses on are these landmarks.³⁸ Abraham is important because his story presents the whence of the Sinai

deity, his purpose, and the nature of his relation to Israel,³⁹ and presents this teaching not by laying down certain theological propositions but as a narrative history which continues into the present.⁴⁰

In 1939 Buber published an essay, "Abraham the See-er" which shows how he goes about elucidating a Biblical text, what his example can teach us about theological exegesis. Buber opens the essay by defining his attitude toward the Wellhausen source theory and describing its difference from his own methodology: tradition criticism. He asserts that he wants to analyze the Biblical narrative itself not what lies behind it. He admits that nowadays the source theory in the sense of positing completed written documents which we can clearly sort out in our text is generally questioned, and agrees, on the other hand, that "also my ear hears the voice of different narrators."⁴¹ (In fact, Mullenberg suggests that Buber may rely too much on this "ear";⁴² it is the basis of his judgment that Abraham in the original text certainly addressed Melchizedek,⁴³ that the idea of the relation between Sabbath and the creation of the world must come from Moses.⁴⁴ In The Prophetic Faith, Buber describes this as "scientific intuition" which implies a "particular scientific responsibility", a method which he can "only hint at here";⁴⁵ he employs the method particularly to establish uniqueness and singularity; his use always seems to imply the question, "Don't you hear it too?") Buber recognizes

that the oldest memories were already preserved with regard to different intentions and so delivered in different accents, that the difference in point of view between prophet and priest would naturally be reflected in a different handling of material and style of presentation. He wants to insist, however, that with the patriarchial legends there is an historical "kernel" though admittedly no objective history, a theme he develops in Moses. In the introduction to Konigtum Gottes he says that he prefers to speak of traditions, of directions of writing, rather than of sources. He sees two different tendencies as already important in the earliest formations of the tradition but maintains that the key to these differences is not the variety in names for God but differences in views of history. He wants to discover the different formative impulses and so describes "J" as representing the courtly interest in world politics, in narrative and "E" as representing the north's theocratic interests with a focus on "message".⁴⁶

Buber intends, however, to work with the given unity of the text, for despite the different traditions lying behind it, the narrative has a unity, an achieved rather than an original one. What the redactor has done is to provide an architectural relation between the various stories. It is this word-architecture which Buber wants to analyze, for it is only through this that we discover how the Bible wants Abraham understood. Clearly the exegetical principles here echo the principles of translation articulated by Buber and

Rosenzweig much earlier. Buber believes that all the traditions really had the same aim in presenting Abraham: to show him as "a father" and precisely as the father called to leave the world of his fathers. It is this which marks Abraham's uniqueness⁴⁷ (and so, as we will see more clearly with respect to Moses, for Buber, his "historicity"). "Without Abraham's experience of doing God's will regardless, there would be no faith of Israel."⁴⁸ Even before there was a people, God prepared its task and way. Abraham is not unhistorical but prehistorical. Buber wants to say that Abraham knew Yahweh, was not a follower of the old El religion. Although there is no way of proving by what name Abraham addressed God, Buber would uphold the truth of the Yahwist's point of view when he puts "Yahweh" into Abraham's mouth.⁴⁹ For Buber the Biblical understanding of Abraham is given in the form. We might also say that Buber's understanding of the Bible is given in his form of interpretation whose motto is to listen to the text in the same close, direct way as the text calls us to listen to God.

Abraham may be regarded as a compact symbol of Israel's past, future, and present. Buber shows how his role as the one who stands between Babel and Sinai is indicated stylistically by selection and composition, by choice of words and images. Abraham's relation to the past is suggested through language parallels to Noah. The relation is never made explicit; it appears to our intuition not our discursive reason; it is drawn in such a way as to point to

both similarities and differences in the situations of the two figures. In Abraham there appears as task what with Noah was given. Noah is spoken of as righteous, blameless, walking with God. Abraham's trust is counted as righteousness; he is told "be blameless, walk before me". Abraham's relation to the future is, of course, given in the words of promise; and he serves as a paradigm of Israel's faithful obedience.

Abraham's role as a model of the man of faith, the seer, is presented through what Buber describes as "the seven revelations of Abraham", which are like stations on his way as he moves from test to test, blessing to blessing.⁵⁰ For Buber these are in order, unimaginable in a different order. He recognizes that the covenant stories in Genesis 15 and 17 come from different traditions but believes they have the same essential complementarity as have the two creation stories, one expressing God's binding with all things living, the other his binding with the tribe. Likewise, Genesis 19 and 20, which are supposedly from different sources, to Buber clearly belong together: Abraham is called a prophet in Chapter 20 because of the intercession for Sodom reported in Chapter 19. "This is not 'redaction' but composition of great artfulness."⁵¹

Although Buber discusses all seven revelations in detail we can get a clear view of his method by focusing on the way in which he relates the first and the last, Genesis

12 and 22. In both God says to Abraham, "Go forth", an expression found only these two times in the Old Testament. There it meant a separation from the father and the past, here from the son and the future. In neither case is Abraham told where he is being sent, only (the first time) that it is out of the land of remembrance, only (the second time) that it is out of the land of expectation. Both times Abraham's response is given not in a word but simply by his going. In the earlier event Abraham is told that God will lead him to where he can see the promised land. In the later one he sees from afar off the place of sacrifice and then at the climactic moment sees the ram which is to be offered in place of his son. But this seeing comes only because God has seen Abraham's fear of God, his innermost heart. And so Abraham calls the mountain, "The Lord will see, the mountain where man will be seen." It is through such a close reading, such a following of the words' way through the text, that Buber works to his conclusion: Scripture never says but lets us gather, Abraham the Seer.

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The next stage along Israel's way after that of "the father" is Moses. Buber's Moses, written in Israel, appeared in 1944. It, too, opens with a methodological statement which is, of course, at the same time a theological one. "Sage and History" presents Buber's belief that the relation between historical originating event and Israel's

memory, between historie and Geschichte, between God's word and man's word, is an inseparable one. It is the experiencing of the event as wonder, as God's work, which shapes the remembering:

A great history-faith does not come into the world through the interpretation of the extra-historical as historical, but by receiving an occurrence experienced as a "wonder", that is as an event which cannot be grasped except as an act of God. Something happens to us, the cause of which we cannot ascribe to our world; the event has taken place just now, we cannot understand it, we can only believe it. It is a holy event.⁵²

Buber makes the same point when he writes of the event at the Red Sea: what was decisive was that the people of Israel understood this as an act of their God.

Miracle is not something "supernatural" or "super-historical", but an incident, an event which can be fully included in the objective, scientific nexus of nature and history; the vital meaning of which, however, for the person to whom it occurs destroys the security of the whole nexus of knowledge.⁵³

In Königtum Gottes Buber had spoken of a "poetic memory" which he relates to Jakob Grimm's "objective spiritualization". Such a memory which elaborates "faithfully", not "fantastically". The recognition of the limitation imposed by the event is what for Buber distinguishes the prophetic or theological imagination from "evil imagining". Buber asked, for example, whether what we call the "Deuteronomic pattern" has been imposed on the account in Judges or whether

it may not rather have already been implicit in the very experiencing of the events recorded there.

In Moses, Buber's approach is somewhat different from what it had been in the Abraham essay because Moses' historicity is of another order from Abraham's and therefore what the commentator seeks is more the person, less simply the paradigm. Here Buber does not restrict himself to working with the composition of the redactor but does something more like what form criticism in the hands of a Bultmann or Dibelius does for the New Testament. Using stylistic and intentional criteria Buber seeks to separate earlier from later reworkings and so to move toward a recovery of the oral tradition:

The procedure of investigation must necessarily be reductive. It must remove layer after layer from the images as set before it in order to arrive at the earliest of all.

There can be no certainty of arriving by this method at "what really happened". However, even if it is impossible to reconstitute the course of events themselves, it is nevertheless possible to recover much of the manner in which the participating people experienced these events.⁵⁴

Buber describes this as "the task of the Bible scholar as I see it";

To separate the early from the late here, and then to advance as far as possible from the reworking of tradition to what may be presumed to be tradition, orally preserved for a longer or shorter time.⁵⁵

The chapter "Legend of the Beginning" offers an example of the application of this method. Buber shows here how a legendary motif shapes the presentation of Moses' boyhood so that the story of the slaying of the children comes into being in order that Moses can be saved. The one appointed to be his people's liberator cannot be one who grew up as a slave nor yet one unconnected with the slaves.

Buber speaks of this as a mythization of history. Since the central figure and the continuity and direction of the events in which he participated come from historical connections and set off fresh ones, this is different from myth; it is "saga". The mythical elements represent the level of depth and meaning, express the sense of "wonder". Buber's understanding of myth is now quite different from that suggested in his 1913 essay "Myth in Judaism". At that time myth had meant an expression of the imagination, now it means response to a real event.⁵⁶ In Good and Evil Buber speaks of the need for both myth and the interpretation of myth:

The mythical has entered into this our field of vision by virtue of the truth of the myths. This cannot, of course, imply that a truth which once existed in non-mythical form has been "decked out" as myth. It implies that the experience which has taken place (not "been gained") in factual encounters.....is directly embodied in myth, without making the detour through conceptual of semi-conceptual determinations.⁵⁷

We are dealing here, as Plato already knew, with truths such as can be communicated adequately to the generality of mankind only in the form of myths.....Everything conceptual in this connection is merely an aid, a useful bridge between myth and reality.....(Man) listens to the myth of Lucifer and hushes it up in his own life. He needs the bridge.⁵⁸

We might recall also what Buber wrote earlier in his introduction to The Legend of the Baal-Shem of the difference between the central figure in myth and in legend, when we read what he now writes in Moses:

The central figures of the Bible saga are not, as in so many hero-tales, marged in or amalgamated with persons belonging to more mythology; the data regarding their lives have not been interwoven with stories of the gods. Here all the glorification is dedicated solely to the God who brings about the events. The human being acting under God's orders is portrayed in all his untransfigured humanity.....This withdrawing of the human being from the mythical element steeps the tale in an atmosphere of august sobriety.....which frequently permits a glimpse of an historical nucleus.⁵⁹

Saga, then, is "history memorizing as it happens";⁶⁰ the practice of glorification, exaltation, and transformation grows of itself from narrator to narrator; it is organic not arbitrary. In trying to recover the "historical kernel" the criterion is not historical factuality but is whether in the period under discussion there exists that religious understanding which is in question. So the search is an historical one; it seeks to understand the links in the chain. Muilenberg accepts Buber's conception of such an historical kernel though he points out that Buber is willing to include more within it than most scholars would.⁶¹ Perhaps Muilenberg is right here; probably the decision about this must depend on extra-literary findings in addition to the form-critical inquiries. Nevertheless it is Buber's pointing out of the character of the relation between kernel and completed legend, his appreciation of a remembering which is both creative and faithful, that seem most helpful here.

Along with this "peeling of the onion" Buber also pays close attention to the completed text and its formal principles:

What was added later is also of importance to us. Even the men who round off and supplement do what they do not arbitrarily but under the sustained urge of the primeval impulse. Tradition is by its nature an uninterrupted change in form; change and preservation function in the identical current. Even while the hand makes its alterations, the ear hearkens to the deeps of the past; not only for the reader but also for the writer himself does the old serve to legitimize the new. The Moses who had his being long ago is properly legitimized by the one who has come into being in the course of the ages.⁶²

The mythization is not to be dismissed; rather its intention is to be penetrated so that we will recognize, for example, that the patterning of the encounter between Pharoah and Moses is meant to suggest to us the great refrain of Israelite history, prophet versus king. The patterning is interpretive; it suggests a relation between Moses and the later prophets and at the same time indicates an essential difference: Moses is victorious in his battle against Pharoah.⁶³ What Buber does here is what form critics have recognized as the second aspect of their task: to make clear the meaning events have come to have, to indicate their double sitz im leben and the necessary non-arbitrary road that leads from one to the other. Buber points out: "an organic and organically creative memory is here at work"; "the experience itself is creative"; it is the wonder "which sets the creative forces of the soul to work";⁶⁴ faith, the force which

formed the saga, cannot be imagined as absent from the transmitted material.⁶⁵

Buber wants to make us see that the saga represents the historical community's response to the events of its own past, the carrying of the originating events livingly into a new present. For the faith dealt with here undertook to become flesh in a people. This is the story of faith's incarnation not in symbol or institution but in the life-relations of a community. The meaning of the event, Buber holds, lies not in the "back then" but in its presently being heard by us as revelation.⁶⁶ As Buber confesses in the preface, what he has sought to do is make Moses' relation to God present to us in this way. What is important for us about Moses is that he experiences God in this fashion and serves him accordingly. This is "what places him thus afresh in our own day, which possibly requires him more than any earlier day has ever done."⁶⁷ Once again, Buber seems to recognize himself as standing "in the chain of narrators".

So much for the statement of methodology. How does Buber actually go about working it out? We look at the first chapter, "Israel in Egypt" and discover once more an interpretation which weaves back and forth between two figures, Moses and Joseph, in order to show how a commentary is created through a counterpointed balancing of situations, through verbal repetitions and literary style. Buber picks out the many parallels between the one who leads Israel into Egypt

and the one who leads her out. There is also (and Mullenberg praises this highly) much use of history of religions material to suggest what Egypt was like at that time and what it "means" in the narrative.

Perhaps we should look in some detail also at the way in which Buber presents the two central events, burning bush and Sinai. In "The Burning Bush" he is centrally concerned to show that YHVH is not a mountain God, that the Kenite hypothesis will not stand up, that this is not an alien God but the God of the fathers. Buber insists on the basic homogeneity of the text,⁶⁸ and tries to show how much of "form and sense" is missed by a source theory which would attribute Ex. 3:7 to the Yahwist and Ex. 3:9 to the Elohist and so miss the correspondence between the two, between having seen the affliction of "my people" and now promising to lead them forth. "Be the sources what they may, I cannot imagine a more powerful refutation of the theory.....that YHVH had hitherto had no dealings with Israel than this double 'My people'".⁶⁹ YHVH had hitherto been known as a clan god who addresses and charges men and himself guides them along the new paths on which he sends them; now he no longer turns only to single persons but to a people, though he speaks of Israel as already his people. This is new but it is not a new God. The change is that now the relation of God and man involves man as a people and the situation is thus transformed into an historical one. In this chapter Buber also presents that interpretation of the ehyeh asher

eheyeh already arrived at in the translation.

Buber's interpretation of Sinai clearly expresses his own understanding of the relation between covenant and law. We can ask which shapes which and can perhaps conclude only that it is a conversation. Buber comes with a question about the law and finds, I believe, that the two are more closely tied here than in his own previous understanding. In continuing his close reading of the narrative he seems himself to discover at least partly why there should be so much interdependence when he comes to the Korah episode. Buber's reading emphasizes the "Thou" of the decalogue, its claim on the one addressed and its intention to be recognized neither as articles of faith nor rules of behavior but as constituting a community. Yet Mullenberg believes that Buber still separates covenant and law too much and thereby fails to take seriously enough the concrete demands of historical existence.⁷⁰ Rylaarsdam suggests that Buber's focus on Ex. 24 rather than Ex. 15 as the basic locus of revelation indicates an essentially mystical and non-historical view: "the realistic disclosure of YHVH as lord of nature and history recedes into the background because of Buber's over-concern with the experience of personal relationship."⁷¹ Von Balthasar suggests that Buber's deafness to these elements is an expression of the unshaken-off influence of lebens-philosophie's polarization of life and petrified forms.⁷² We must note that these are theological questions but also methodological ones, that the way by which

Buber comes to his conclusions is being put in question, and thereby obviously the faithfulness with which he attends to the text. Yet obviously Buber has heard from the text and has come to a much greater appreciation of the place of the law than at the time of his dispute with Rosenzweig. Almost paradoxically perhaps, his presentation of the dialogical context has been more helpful to many of us than any other interpretation in bringing us to understand the law as gracious revelation, as unescapably part of the covenant. Nor is it necessarily mystical to insist that to recognize history as the place of encounter between man and God means to know the God who spoke in the past as the presently speaking God. To see the always ambiguous relation between life and form which Buber in I and Thou called "the exalted melancholy of our fate" is far from asserting a simple incompatibility. As earlier with the metaphor of the falling star, so here also, lebens-philosophie's confusion of the human and divine has been left behind: the law is God's gift to man.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The next stage of Israel's way after Moses is portrayed in Buber's Königtum Gottes, first published in Germany in 1932, in which he presents Israel's attempt to live as a community under God's immediate rulership. In Moses what characterizes YHWH is his guiding presence with the wondering people; here he is the Melekh, the Lord, the community's leader, not as in Egypt where in the king human

and divine are merged but as one who really stands over against Israel. Buber's method here includes an analysis of divine kingship in the ancient near east and a clarification of the distinction between Melekh and Baal; he shows how the Biblical presentation of YHVH as Melekh fulfills and transforms, realizes and personalizes, the Semitic conception of Melekh.⁷³ Mullenberg believes that this suggestion of YHVH as a Melekh may be Buber's most fruitful contribution to Biblical scholarship: Buber was the pioneer with this idea which since him Engnell and Mowinckle and others have followed up, "and probably Buber got it best".⁷⁴

Yet Mullenberg questions Buber's centering his analysis on Judges 8.19ff. Buber takes this as an early text (although Buber is more concerned with the earliness of the attitude expressed than of the text itself) and Mullenberg says, "Here Buber's 'intuitive' method has led him astray."⁷⁵ By bringing us to see its daring in its setting, Buber wants to make clear that Gideon's refusal is not "dogma" but a risk of faith. Buber believes that this renunciation speaks so unique a voice as to authenticate historicity. He claims that here again we have memory not fantasy, albeit a poetizing memory. The question is not one of factuality but: can this word have been spoken in this time?⁷⁶

We should note here also, and should recall as we are doing so, Buber's own way forward, that for Buber the Bible's way forward is a way of failure: first the failure

of the Judges' way and later of the way of the kings. Jacob Taubes believes that this shows that Buber is really a romantic utopian who seeks a model for history in the moments of unmediated charismatic leadership and who regards historical development, the necessity of channelling, preserving, and institutionalizing leadership, as denial and estrangement.⁷⁷ Yet the pointing out of these findings does not mean that Buber is regressive, that he sees fulfillment as lying only in the past, to be found only by going back, but rather very simply that this is the way forward, as he had found in his own life earlier.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The essay, "Der Gesalbte", originally planned as part of the second volume of Das Kommende, considers the turning-point in the history of Israel's faith between the time of Gideon and the time of the monarchy. The Philistine capture of the ark is seen by the people as a defeat of the leader God himself.⁷⁸ The Word of God was precious then "for no vision broke through" until Samuel was called to utter the divine word in the days without the ark. Samuel was a nabi, not of Eli's priestly family, and he was called to play the part of anointing the worldly human king whom the people in their longing for some established political authority desired. In his essay Buber focuses on the relationship between Saul and Samuel, king and prophet, in

I Sam. 7-12. Again Buber discerns a unity here which the usual parcelling out between different sources fails to take seriously enough. This continued insistence on the redactor's unification (even though in some particular instances we may be rather more struck than Buber seems to be by the lack of integration) seems an important balance to the source-critical tendency to identify the disintegrated and the meaningful. Buber says that he agrees that the account in Ch. 10:17ff about Saul's choice by lot cannot come from the same old tradition as the earlier account in 9:1-10:16⁷⁹ and yet he wants to make us see why the redactor included both, what kind of questions about the institution of kingship the second answers which the other does not. The narrator bound together the two "sources" precisely to show the "yes" and the "no", the ambivalence of the monarchy.⁸⁰ In Ch. 8 God first tells Samuel to warn the people of the ways of a king, to show them what it is they are really asking for, but then continues: "Harken to their voice and make them a king." The people are shown that their request for a king is really a denial of God, not of Samuel, but also that God doesn't therefore reject them; he warns and accedes.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Prophetic Faith, written but not published before
Buber left Germany for Palestine, is the central one amongst

all these books of Biblical commentary, both because here Buber includes the full historical sweep from Abraham to Jesus and because the figure of the nabi who is for Buber the prototype of the man of Biblical faith now occupies that central position given over before to God's kingship. This change seems significant in indicating how more and more Buber understands the Old Testament's symbolic forms as words. The nabi is the word-speaker, the announcer. In "marking the historical way of the teaching", in indicating how the changing forms of the prophet's message fit it to new historical situations and their different demands, Buber is tracing the word's way through history. Buber also notes the prophets' peculiar relationship to history; they call for a decision in the historical present with regard to the historical future from the community, the historical people. Yet Buber's book contains very little "world-history", much less than most Biblical introductions, only enough to define the particular circumstances and to suggest the way which leads from one prophet to his successors.

The prophets represent the taking seriously of the king's anointing; they demand responsibility from the kings to YHWH. Beginning probably with Solomon's dedication of the Temple, the kings had sought to confine YHWH's sovereignty to the cultic realm, to make of him a Baal. Ironically, in becoming a cosmic Lord the actuality of God's kingship is diminished.⁸¹ Most of Buber's book is concerned with the

individual major prophets; what they represent is "The Turning to the Future" as the time of hope, the time when Israel will truly become God's kingdom. Through his analyses Buber seeks to show what characterizes the prophets and thereby, implicitly, what distinguishes them from the later apocalypticists whom Buber regards as perversers of true prophecy. He therefore emphasizes the importance of the concrete situations out of which they speak and the significance of their word being an actually spoken one which proclaims and demands. The Buber who said "for truly I am no zaddik" would also say "truly I am no nabi"; yet it is apparent that he looks to the word-way of the nabi as prefigurative of his own, and that he interprets the suffering of his time in the image of the servant.⁸²

As usual Buber pays close attention to the words and images which a particular prophet stresses. In reading Hosea, Buber wants us to understand how not just this prophet's mouth but his whole personality, his whole personal life, were required for his prophecy.⁸³ Instead of the covenant metaphor with its legalistic and political implications, Hosea uses the cluster of images drawn from his own relationship to Gomer (marriage, childbearing, adultery, divorce, reconciliation) to point to the character of God's love for Israel.⁸⁴ By daring to use the metaphor of marriage in his protest against the baalization of the worship of YHVH, Hosea shows that the only god that could displace YHVH was his own

distorted image.⁸⁵ Buber shows how all of Hosea's message, his proclamation of God's call for turning and of God's promise, "I will heal their turnings away", springs from this lived-through, mythisized, autobiographical event. Of course, Buber is one who has himself experienced how such mythisization of personal history can transform it into message.

In the chapter on Isaiah, Buber seeks to bring into view the origin of Messianic belief, the formulation of Israel's hope. He shows how from the beginning this formulation, this word of comfort, was received so as to give a false confidence, how Isaiah was warned that his task "would make heavy their ears". The Messiah is the true king, the one who would act like an anointed king, the man whose absence is felt.⁸⁶ Isaiah's hope, according to Buber, is not at first "eschatological", is not at its core mythological, for it has reference to the historical present, the ever-changing center of history. The Messiah is a figure drawn from history not myth, who would set up with human forces and responsibility the divine ordering of the human community. "However mythical the garb of the Messiah.....he is in no way.....more than man."⁸⁷ Isaiah doesn't announce a prediction but an alternative: here is a role, but there is something essential that must come from man. Isaiah learns that YHWH hides his face from the house of Jacob but longs to show it again. Those who know this wait and hope, "stretched out to meet" him.⁸⁸ Yet in the second Messianic song, when Isaiah has been disappointed in Hezekiah, Buber senses much more emphasis on

God's activity and the Ch. 11:6-8 description of peace "in the lateness of days" becomes truly eschatological though still not apocalyptic. Yet this description is also more universalized: Israel will stand as a blessing in the midst of the earth. The focus is no longer on a Messianic figure but on the age which is to come when the ways and name of God will be given to all nations.⁸⁹ Buber succeeds in making clear to us how Isaiah's messianism springs from his wrestling with the question of how God's rule in history is to be realized. We see that the point of Buber's close reading is to make us re-enact the questioning of how history and meaning, the present and the time of fulfillment, are related.

In writing of Jeremiah, Buber wants to clarify the prophetic understanding of the relation between God's word and man's. This means in part distinguishing between the traditional word, whether priestly rite or legalistic code, which functions now as a work of man and the word which "comes again and again from heaven as something new and makes its abode within man", "which breaks into the whole order of the word world and breaks through", the word which happens, the hammer that smashes the rock:

This is not the expression of a familiar deity with whom man comes into regular contact in fixed places and at fixed times. He, who speaks, is incomprehensible, irregular, surprising, overwhelming, sovereign. Therefore, it is the virtue of this word, and of this alone, to lead, that is to say, to show the way.⁹⁰

This word which always occurs as an event is spoken between persons: "In order to speak to man God must become a person; but in order to speak to him, He must make him too a person.⁹¹ The word is spoken to the prophet "in another language from which he has to translate it into human language.

All Israelite relationship of faith is dialogic; here the dialogue has reached its pure form. Man can speak, he is permitted to speak; if only he truly speaks to God, there is nothing he may not say to Him.⁹²

Jeremiah sees how easily any externalizing of God's word becomes an idolatrization and so he believes and promises that YHWH himself will write his word upon Israel's heart, will put his word inside man. This is a hope for the future but Jeremiah, unlike Ezekiel, does not try to peek into that future, to obtain a picture of it, to discern the forms in which the changed heart would express itself. "He has no other imagination than the full grasping of the present."⁹³ The future can not be depicted beforehand because it depends on human deeds and misdeeds. Buber also shows how Jeremiah found himself almost powerless against the easy words of the false prophets who called the wishful visions of their own hearts the word of God. Jeremiah is given no supernatural might; God speaks - but only through a powerless prophet.⁹⁴ This "prophet fulfills in himself instead of the rebellious people purification and repentance."⁹⁵ Now between Yahweh and his suffering servants a mysterious connection is opened.

All through the chapter on Jeremiah we hear the

undertones of Buber's own search for the narrow ridge between subjectivity, the lying images of the heart, and objectivization, word become lifeless idol. All through the book we see Buber learning from the Old Testament prophets how a genuinely theological imagination translates personal experiences into message, how it responds to changing historical situations, how its images arise and are revised. Buber seems to feel especially close to Second Isaiah, perhaps because he understands himself as standing in a somewhat similar intermediate position. He understands his word-speaking as a continuation of the prophets' proclamation; he, too, has been given the tongue of those who are taught.

In turning to Second Isaiah Buber explicitly says he will use the point of view of form criticism, paying attention not only to the use of words but also to the details of style and rhythm.⁹⁶ This makes it possible to discern important inner connections created through the way some central words and word-groups recur from section to section and form links by which passages may complement and explain one another. Such attention to form also illuminates Second Isaiah's peculiar relation to Isaiah, the way in which the meaning of Isaiah's basic conceptions is here opened out and made dynamic, and in which what was there reproof and warning here becomes comfort.

The figure of the servant in Second Isaiah is of very great importance to Buber; this is the image through which the great leaders of the past, Abraham and Moses, are best

understood and which may also be related to such men of the future as Jesus and the Polish Hasids. This image is the expression for that secret moving midpoint of history of which Buber has written elsewhere.⁹⁷ Buber works very close to the text in establishing the nature and purpose of the figure; he makes a word study of what attributes are given to Israel, to Cyrus, and to the Servant as a means of clarifying the relationships between them. He shows how Second Isaiah's customary contrast between former things and future things is also relevant here. The former messianic images of hope are transformed, partly through the prophet's disappointment of Cyrus, into the new image. Israel the inadequate servant is replaced by the model of the faithful servant; God says to the servant: "Thou art the Israel in whom I glorify myself." The ambiguity as to whether the servant is an individual person or the people is not to be dissolved; it is intentional. Buber concludes that Second Isaiah identifies himself with "the present of the servant, without by this identifying himself with him";⁹⁸ "he felt himself as one of the figurations of the servant."⁹⁹ The figure is personal not corporate, means an actual not an "ideal" individual, but is fulfilled in a series of persons. In Good and Evil, Buber speaks of another such series of persons as "the Psalmist" because the psalms complete one another like stages of a personal way."¹⁰⁰ Buber shows how the image of the arrow hidden in the quiver is related to this conception. The prophet who has not really been used "and is apparently not

likely to be shot any longer" uses this image to describe himself, just before he is told of the greater task which has been saved for him. This task belongs to the man who is speaking "by its nature, but in the reality of the fulfillment spreads far beyond this particular being." 101

This person takes shape in many likenesses and lifeways, the bearers of which are identical in their innermost essence, but no supernatural event, no resurrection of the dead leads from one of these figures to the next. 102

What the servant as transformation of Isaiah's Messiah figure means to Buber is that now the human mediator of redemption is to be seen not as the anointed politically empowered king but as the nabi, as the word-speaker, who is not simply powerless but makes an act of enduring his sufferings. 103 Now the prophet not only defines true leadership but is again to lead, like Moses. Because the prophets have fulfilled their calling while the kings haven't fulfilled theirs, it is from their midst that the figure of the perfected one will arise. The prophet upholds the living connection between God and the people, "not alone by interposing on behalf of Israel but far more by being the true Israel." 104 It is really this image which is the ground of Buber's conviction that Second Isaiah is no apocalyptist.

Second Isaiah is clearly the most lyric of the prophets; the question is whether his word is still really spoken within an historical and dramatic understanding. Buber says that we have here a new conception of prophecy:

His prophecy no longer has the character of an alternative; his God no longer sets before men two possibilities, in deciding between which they may have a share; He has decided and man is only the object of his decision.¹⁰⁵

His is the first prophecy to "foretell things fixed and unchangeable". The drama between man and God is a thing of the past, overcome by God's forgiveness. Second Isaiah has no sense of the depths of man's opposition to God; this to him belongs only to the surface of history.

Yet there is no place in Deutero-Isaiah for apocalyptic subjection before a fate entirely independent of man and powerful over him, and no place for the apocalyptic "removing the veil". He sees, as the prophets before him, not a sphere on the yonder side of history only arrayed in its likeness; he beholds the mighty life of the occurring hour.¹⁰⁶

God does not allow history to be unrolled like a scroll but he himself enters into it; there is no other supernatural power which even temporarily opposes him.

During this time in which history holds its breath, the alternative is silent. In this moment what is in question is no longer a choosing as a people between two ways but apprehending as an individual the new, higher summons which shall be fulfilled through a series of servants of the Lord.¹⁰⁷

What seems to be decisive here for Buber is Second Isaiah's concern with the present, "the undogmatic historical realism" of his faith,¹⁰⁸ not with some future other time and with God's acting in the present not only to end it but to meet man's opposition as if it were real. In Good and Evil in commenting on Psalm 12 Buber writes:

With this "Now" there breaks out of the midst of extreme trouble the manifestation of a salvation which is not just bound to come some time, but is always present and needs only to become effective. This "now" is the decisive prophetic category.¹⁰⁹

Of Second Isaiah's significance for us Buber has written: "An epoch such as ours, entangled in guilt and far from atonement, can learn something great from this prophet, but it cannot take anything directly from him."¹¹⁰ Buber sees this limitation and yet seems, nevertheless, to have taken more from this prophet than from any other, perhaps because he understands himself also as in the "intermediate position between the full prophetic immediacy of receiving and uttering, and the acquired status of an interpreter who explains words handed down";¹¹¹ perhaps also because Second Isaiah's poetry seems to come not from a denial of history but from its further side and so points like a prophetic dream to a way of writing which might overcome the either/or of lyric and dramatic, poetic and conceptual, mystical and biblical word.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

As we look back over Buber's reading of the Old Testament we are particularly interested in assessing his method of tracing the way of a particular word (such as "prophet" or "kingship of God") through the Scriptures. His attention to such structural metaphors seems even more significant than his care for textural detail. He seems here

to approach a conception of Old Testament theology as properly a theology of symbolic forms, a theology of word-events, which he never quite formulates. To bring this significance into view it may be helpful to relate his work to the somewhat similar projects of Erich Voegelin, Walther Eichrodt, and Gerhard von Rad.

In Israel and Revelation, Erich Voegelin seems to fail to do justice to the Old Testament in so far as he is looking for a philosophy of symbolic forms and thus seems to prize the differentiated forms of philosophy more than the compact symbolism of myth. This Hegelian preference for the "logological" over the "mythological", for the logic of concept and proposition over the logic or image¹¹² prevents him at certain points from coming to as true an understanding as Buber has of the distinctive nature of the biblical imagination which is never simply to be identified with that mythical experiencing of the world as theophany which then leads forward (as in Greece) to a differentiation of theos and phanein, God and phenomenon.

For in the Old Testament the image-making occurs always within the remembered context of three "texts" (although, typically, the context shapes the texts rather than vice-versa):

Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.

Gen. 1.26

So out of the ground (from which God had already formed man), the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name.

Gen. 2.19

You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God....You shall not take the name of your Lord in vain. Exod. 20.4-7

Images are not to be gotten beyond, since man himself is the image of God, and thus a creator like God; a creaturely creator who gives names, creates images, and yet cannot breathe life into them. His images remain images, and this is as true of the philosopher's ideal as of the pagan's idol. Because the Old Testament recognizes that man's images are but words, names, it is consciously word-play metaphor.

Voegelin, of course, also recognizes that in the process of differentiation "the bond of compactness that holds the undifferentiated elements together" may be lost,¹¹³ yet seems not to be conscious enough of what Cleanth Brooks calls "the heresy of paraphrase", the mistaking of our propositional expansions for "what the poem really says".¹¹⁴ For the compactness, the ambiguities and paradoxes, of poetic or metaphorical statement present what it would take pages to approximate in straightforward prose and would even then be wrenched from its meaning which cannot be isolated from the compactness, the dramatic tension.

A theology of symbolic forms would take an approach to symbol which springs not from the philosopher's view of symbol as inadequate because sensuously-confused articulation of meaning, but from the biblical recognition of the

binding of the meaningful as it may be seen by man to the sensuous and concrete. Buber understands that the attempt to get beyond the symbols, beyond the forms, is heresy indeed, the attempt to see God himself, or to see as God sees.

For what we have in the Old Testament is a new form of word. As Amos Wilder notes in his Language of the Gospel a new truth demands a new language; to be at the limits of what can be said in a language, through the given symbols, is what renews language.¹¹⁵ Voegelin recognizes in the historical narratives of the Pentateuch "a new type of story that is neither myth nor pragmatic history" and furthermore, that this new form in a sense creates its material, that it absorbs various kinds of "content" and "transforms them according to its own principle of construction"; that is, the "meaning" can be "ascertained only by recourse to the experiential motivations of the form" not from its "subject-matter".¹¹⁶ Here Voegelin is pointing to the creative power of metaphor: the Sinai paradigm shapes the pragmatic existence of Israel, rather than vice-versa.¹¹⁷ Voegelin sees clearly that to study the Old Testament means to examine paradigmatic events such as Sinai or Exodus, that is single historical events which have become for the writers of the Old Testament images of God's way with man in this world. Like Buber he wants us to recognize them as metaphors which have been elaborated so as to heighten the point rather than to increase the pragmatic accuracy.

Walther Eichrodt, in his Theology of the Old Testament first published in 1933, took the absolutely essential first step toward such a theology of Old Testament symbolic forms, a revolutionary one at the time, although Buber's Königtum Gottes a year earlier takes a similar direction. Eichrodt understood that Old Testament theology must be done as literary criticism, that is not in terms of the structure of rationalistic concepts derived from Greek philosophy and imposed on a quite differently organized literature. He perceived that the Bible's unity is determined by its own central concepts and that to illumine its meaning means to take this structure seriously, rather than to abstract a propositional meaning from it. Therefore he proposes to substitute "covenant" for a "bloodless abstraction like ethical monotheism" and to show how it functions in this structural, meaning-disclosing, and unifying way:

The concept of the covenant was given this central position in the religious thinking of the Old Testament so that, by working outward from it, the structural unity of the Old Testament message might be made more readily visible.¹¹⁸

Eichrodt recognizes the peculiarity, the characteristically biblical nature, of this image; its historical aspect. Covenant refers to a process with a particular historical beginning,¹¹⁹ the events at Sinai. To perceive the centrality of this concept is to see that what the Old Testament is about is not God but the encounter between God and man in history, in event. The activity of God "can only be expressed

in words in combination with the (human) response",¹²⁰ can only be expressed by a word which represents this combination, this binding. Because covenant means just this, the binding-together of God and man, it is the central symbol for the whole of Old Testament theology, the structural key. We might even say that in choosing covenant as central metaphor, Eichrodt has picked out the Old Testament metaphor for metaphor.

The response, the appropriation, the naming of the event, is "the decisive inward event" "without which all external fact must become myth", that is, become but tales of the gods and the past, not of my life in the present. As Buber once wrote, in pure myth

there is no division of essential being. It knows multiplicity but not duality. Even the hero only stands on another rung than that of the God, not over against him: they are not the I and the Thou ... (whereas) the legend is the myth of the calling ... the myth of I and Thou, of the caller and the called.¹²¹

"Covenant" compactly presents this biblical form of myth: the myth of address and response. The naming of the events at Sinai as a "covenant" which then binds me for all my days is seen here as the decisive example of the Old Testament's symbolic ordering of the facts of human existence.

Yet although Eichrodt in some ways very clearly recognizes the historical character of this image, again and again his material seems to insist that he take its historicity more seriously than his own methodology allows.

For he seeks to undertake a "cross-sectional" analysis of covenant rather than to trace the historical development.¹²² The historical approach seems to him to presuppose a false evolutionary view which puts meaning only at the end of the development. As a critique of the nineteenth century school of research dominated by Wellhausen, this may be quite valid; von Rad makes a similar criticism in claiming that Wellhausen's historicism is too Hegelian, that it approaches Israel's history as a history of ideas, as a spiritual evolution, an emancipation of the spiritual from the natural and corporate.¹²³ But there are other ways of taking history seriously, ways suggested by Buber's method of tracing the development of an image. To see the Old Testament as a history of metaphors would be to see it precisely as the continuing bond of spiritual with natural. And to see it as a metaphor of history would be to recognize the historical element as structural, not because of the location of meaning in the end but rather because of the continued shaping of present by past and past by present. The history of the images, their continual reworking, is that through which complexity, irony, and depth are achieved. The historical development becomes the testing of the vision. The findings of source criticism are helpful here because they uncover the compositional complexity, show the interrelations of the viewpoints brought together by the redactor. Since each attacks at a different plane, because no two metaphors or analogies are ever quite equivalent, the conjunction of

incongruous symbols and traditions creates ironical relationships. What the Old Testament as such, as brought together in its final form by the redactor is, is precisely this complex whole, created here as much by history as by artifice. We miss this structure in Eichrodt's cross-sectional approach, even though we respect his seeking to avoid the purely fragmentary results which he believes a purely kerygmatic and confessional approach (through its failing to focus on the achieved unity) leaves us with.¹²⁴

Eichrodt begins with history, with the insistence that Biblical knowledge of God is knowledge of God's acts in history, but he ends up adopting, or being stuck with still, an inadequate conception of history (and so of metaphor), one applied to the Bible but not really congruous with its own understanding. We begin to understand then why Eichrodt refers to the central image of his theology as a "concept". Does it not function for him after all in a rationalistic, logological way, as an eternal truth which simply happens to have been brought to the Israelite's awareness in a happening, but which isn't itself "really" historical?

Eichrodt notes that the meaning of berith develops along two quite different lines of thought (or poetic association?), one leading to legalism and cult, the other to eschatological fulfillment.¹²⁵ He concludes that it is just this conjunction of the demands and the graciousness of God

which alone gives the whole content of the Old Testament understanding, although "it may indeed be true that the composite picture, this insight into the coherence of two at first sight divergent manifestations of the divine will, was not to be found, at any rate in this form, in ancient Israel." ¹²⁶ And of course, he is right; there is never a propositional reconciliation, but only that metaphorical bringing-together supplied by the redactor's arrangement which Buber so wants us to perceive. Eichrodt conceives the theologian's task, as he reaffirms it in the course of his discussion of von Rad's Theology, as "pressing on from the Old Testament evidence to a system of faith.....a unified structure"; ¹²⁷ the difficulty is that he still understands this desired structure too conceptually.

Here von Rad is on better ground. He recognizes clearly the importance of the redactor and yet the difficulty of understanding his system. Yet he sees that the given unity is indeed a kind of systematics, where to group means simply to follow the historical sequence. The criterion of the possibility of conjunction is relation to the same historical event. This historical rather than logical organization manifests "the absolute priority in theology of event over logos." ¹²⁸ Because this is so, retelling is for him as for Buber the most legitimate form of theological discourse on the Old Testament: it preserves the historical thread, the paradigmatic event, as the basis of ordering. ¹²⁹

Von Rad also recognizes how this grouping, arrangement, can itself become the vehicle of the redactor's indirect theological speaking:

The chief method employed in the theological unfolding of the tradition was.....much more indirect, for it consisted in the way in which separate pieces of material were connected. The lay-out of the primeval history, the story of Abraham, the relationship of the period of the patriarch's to that of Joshua, etc., (sic) is arranged in such a way that quite definite theological tensions, which the great collector intended, arise out of the sequence of the material itself.¹³⁰

Von Rad's understanding here of the Old Testament history as remembered history interpreted by faith suggests Buber's "mythisication of history". von Rad, like Buber, seeks to distinguish the presentation of the Red Sea crossing or of the Joshua conquest from literal, objective history, to make us recognize that although the Bible presents these as historical events actually they function as images of faith. Israel's faith may indeed be grounded in a theology of history but this is different from saying it is grounded in objective history. Thus von Rad, too, is quarreling with the nineteenth century historians who thought that by getting to what had "really" happened one would get at the meaning; his distinction is similar to H. Richard Niebuhr's differentiation of subjective and objective views of history, history as seen and as experienced. What he is primarily interested in showing, though, is that for the Old Testament history is really created by the historical imagination which uses certain images in order to create meaningful pattern out of

otherwise meaningless succession, and whose commitment to these image-patterns then shapes Israel's ongoing history. This means that it is as true to speak of image creating history as of history creating image.

Von Rad pays attention to the metaphorical composition of the Hexateuch, which is based on a very few old motifs surrounded by organically developed clusters;¹³¹ he seeks to discern the peculiarities of "the way in which faith perceives things",¹³² the patterns characteristic of a confessional presentation, the poetic techniques which enabled Israel "to express experiences met with in the course of history in such a way as to make the past become absolutely present."¹³³ Thus he sees clearly that what the theologian is presented with in the Old Testament is poetry not conceptual knowledge nor objective history, is an imaginative literature, and that a proper understanding depends upon an approach which will recognize this. Von Rad knows that poetry here is no mere "esthetic pastime"; "historical poetry was the form in which Israel....made sure of historical facts, that is of their location and their significance."¹³⁴ What he seeks is to grasp the "coefficient of interpretation"; Israel's faith is not the "content" of the Old Testament but rather the perspective from which history as God's mighty acts is seen.

We must note clearly this stress on the imaginative factor, for it is here that Eichrodt claims von Rad dissolves the true history, drops out any genuine historical

foundation,¹³⁵ as von Balthasar accuses Buber of doing. Such dissolution, he says, makes the emergence of Israel's religious conceptions a matter of pure chance, rather than determined by a determinative event, and thereby makes of Old Testament faith (again recall von Balthasar's criticisms) a religious philosophy. The so-called historical foundation is looked upon as a mythical, misunderstood-if-taken-literally, element from which the religious meaning must be abstracted.

Perhaps we might conclude that von Rad does sometimes seem unjustly to minimize the importance for the Old Testament's self-understanding of the historicity of the originating event; that Voegelin recognizes it but feels it to be ultimately limitation; that Buber wants to have it both ways, admitting that significance lies in the paradigmatic aspect yet wanting to include more as genuinely factual than most source critics would; and that Eichrodt minimizes the historicity of the writers, their confessional perspective, which von Rad so clearly brings into view. An adequate understanding of the Biblical imagination will need to admit that the claim of an original and irremovable bond between event and image is central to the Old Testament's understanding of metaphor, but must then read the image work as image work, an imaginative effort undertaken by those conscious of participating in an historical task, of working with images constitutive of their people's past and now to be made active in their own present. The Biblical writers knew that

renewal means more than recollection and repetition, that it calls for their own lives, their own perspectives, new creation.

Because von Rad looks upon the primary historical motifs as poetic creations and not objective events (though like Buber and Voegelin he recognizes a limit on the symbolic, keygmatic, explication of what was to begin with a "real" not fictional event¹³⁶ even though the factual can no longer be detached from the spiritualizing interpretations¹³⁷), it seems legitimate to describe the redactor's system as metaphorical, rather than conceptual or historical. All that has developed as an organic expansion of the same symbol belongs together no matter when the expansion took place, because it is this expansion, this re-interpretation, that keeps the symbol symbolic, that makes it historical, that is meaningful for present existence. Israel's use of the ordering power of ratio, as von Rad says,¹³⁸ is applied to the ever-renewed reflection on the meaning of historical events, to a boundless quest for the meaning of her history, a quest which in turn makes possible the living in history, the making of history, the exodus from past to future.

In practice, despite the cross-sectional project, Eichrodt presents this ever-renewed reflection as it is applied to covenant. He shows how through a re-interpretation it remains the image through which the biblical writers (and not only the historians among them) of many generations

understand their relation to God. For the Yahwist this image makes it possible to see as historical the period before Sinai, an understanding which he expresses by retrojecting the covenant into the patriarchial period, thus demonstrating the formative power of symbol on history: through the symbol the past events are ordered for the sake of present meaning.¹³⁹ Eichrodt presents the stages in the differentiation of the compact metaphor and the dangers of this "unpacking", of a translation into propositions or terminology, whereby covenant is understood legalistically or religiously.¹⁴⁰ This suggests how important it becomes within the Old Testament to prevent the naming of an event being understood as the discovery of "religious terminology". That biblical metaphors are an analogical use of everyday concepts is not to be lost sight of. To understand the Biblical images it is important then to try to do what Buber sought in his translation, to "secularize" them, to free them of pietistic and theological overcoatings. This attempt at re-secularization is actually a continuation of the prophetic effort within the Bible to keep images such as covenant from becoming idols. The aim seems close to what Dietrich Bonhoeffer called for as a "non-religious interpretation of biblical concepts" which the Bible for its own part ultimately demands.¹⁴¹

It is because covenant can become religious terminology, legalistic or cultic, that, as Eichrodt recognizes, the prophets do not use this image for the God-man relation

when they are insisting on grace and the personal element in relationship, on love and loyalty and surrender.¹⁴² Eichrodt perceives the danger, "once the berith has become the all-embracing symbol.....and is no longer qualified by other images" ¹⁴³ of perversion of the covenant order into a cultic relationship.

This recognition that the Old Testament's images cannot all be reduced to one, that the qualifying images must be taken into account, suggests that Old Testament theology demands a tracing of a whole group of central metaphors and the relationships between them. Von Rad also concludes that the Old Testament contains "a number of distinct and heterogeneous revelatory acts" and "seems to be without a centre which determines everything and which could give to the various separate acts both an interpretation and their proper theological connection with one another." ¹⁴⁴ The unity of the Old Testament grows out of the interrelationships between many such biblical images; it is only by seeing their individual "histories" and their complex interweaving that we begin to get a sense of the kind of structural unity which the Old Testament has. We should bring together Buber's tracing of nabi and kingship, Eichrodt's study of berith, with similar explorations of such central Old Testament images as creation and exodus.

What such paths might all lead toward is that theology of symbolic forms of which we spoke earlier, studies

of the "distinctive images of the Old Testament" which might replace the old search for its "distinctive ideas" ¹⁴⁵ (though even that was really a reading of distinctive words such as chesed, quodesh, and mishpat, somewhat like Kittel's project of New Testament word studies).

To do this job properly it would obviously be necessary to have enough familiarity with the history of semitic and other mediterranean religions to be able to indicate just how and why the Old Testament images are distinctive. I have in mind the kind of reading Brevard Childs does so well in his monograph, Myth and Reality in the Old Testament, when he shows how the borrowed motifs in the Biblical stories of creation, fall and flood, are transformed in the biblical retelling. Buber's analysis of how the Exodus portrayal of Moses is built up by the contrast between Egyptian and Hebraic understandings of "the Son of God" is another excellent example, which suggests again that perhaps it isn't the images themselves which are "peculiar" but the freedom with which they are used. Because here they are recognized as images, as vocabulary, we could almost say that the Old Testament "demythologizes" the images which it borrows.

And, of course, it also historicizes them. The central symbolic forms are words which are never wholly detachable from a particular event. As Voegelin says, in Israel "the spiritual meaning of the exodus from civilization was well understood but nevertheless remained inseparable from

the concrete exodus from Egypt." ¹⁴⁶ What distinguishes the biblical metaphor is obviously the indissoluble bond between meaning and event. Here the void is always still the desert on the other side of the Red Sea; here airy nothing has a local habitation and a name. Yet before reading this off as deficiency (as indeed it must be for the philosopher) we need to recognize that this "failure" expresses Israel's understanding of truth as event, as happening, rather than as always there waiting to be unveiled, recollected. For Israel the truth and its having happened at this time and place are not separable. And is this not also true for the poet's understanding of how truth is discovered to him:

You wake up one morning or you pause on a walk and you have a thought in your hands, a knowing thought that you see for the first time and yet which is ripe and ready as if you had formed it ever a very long time. But while you are regarding it, you notice that it bears a sign: It is an image out of a place and a moment and.....the sign cleaves to it.¹⁴⁷

Metaphors spring from the recognition of meaning in concrete event, they are a saying which seeks to retain this binding of the universal and particular. Blackmur tells us that

symbol is the most exact possible meaning, almost tautologically exact, for what stirred the words to move and what the moving words made. Symbol stands for nothing previously known but for what is "here" made known.¹⁴⁸

As Auden says:

The pure poem, in the French sense of la poesie pure, would be, I suppose, a celebration of the numinous-in-itself, in abstraction from all cases and devoid of any profane references.¹⁴⁹

but the poems which can be written bear within themselves their arising from an encounter. The Bible's words remain metaphorical; a theology of the old Testament which took this into account would have to be a theology of symbolic forms, of metaphors.

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Buber actually approaches the Old Testament along such lines without ever defining his method in this way. Yet his contrast between the prophetic imagination and the apocalyptic imagination is in fact a contrast between a theology of metaphor and a theology of fancifully elaborated allegory. Buber elaborates his distinction between the prophet and the apocalyptic writer in the 1954 essay on "Prophecy, Apocalyptic and the Historical Hour." This essay will serve us as an introduction to Two Types of Faith not only because in it Buber discusses the period between the Babylonian exile and the time of Jesus, but also because it lays bare the presuppositions and the typology which underlies the contrast between the Jewish Jesus and the Christian Paul so central to that book. That the essay follows rather than precedes again indicates that for Buber a methodology and a typology aren't really the prolegomena so much as they are the conclusion; that he discovers them, brings them to clarity, by letting them express themselves with regard to the concrete. They emerge from the encounter between him and his "subject-matter", not simply from his own subjectivity.

This, of course, does not mean that both the method and its results cannot be questioned, that they are "objective" in the scientific sense, for one participant in the encounter is Buber. I think he might say concerning such interpretive conclusions, which are clearly personal decisions, what he does say about ethical decisions in the more general sense, that they are individualized without being relativized,¹⁵⁰ and are not meant to spare our own inquiry and investigation. They are Buber's answer to that in the situation, here the speaking text, which he recognizes as addressed to him, entrusting something to him and demanding something from him, namely his witness.

In this sense Buber's understanding of himself as an interpreter, as one who puts the message of the possibility of turning to this generation in its own language,¹⁵¹ is itself prophetic. Part of what he disclaims in apocalyptic is its different way of responding, so that we can speak of the two as different literary modes.¹⁵² Once again two different ways of being in the world, two different ways of understanding man's relation to God, are reflected in different ways of speaking, different understandings of the word. The prophetic attitude knows that it cannot learn the limit of what is attainable in a desired direction except through going in that direction,¹⁵³ as Buber and Rosenzweig had sought in their translation to discover the limits of German by pushing to those limits themselves. Apocalyptic suggests to Buber just that kind of arbitrary freedom which he had long ago rejected

with regard to his own handling of the Hasidic material. To Buber the apocalyptists' "new world" is a wish-born fulfillment of fantasy, an image which is then extended through logical speculation rather than in "obedience"; there is in it no sense of responsibility. Apocalypse in this typology is thus brought very close to what is called "evil" in Good and Evil: play with possibility in the swirling space of images.¹⁵⁴ In the essay Buber transposes this polarity from the autobiographical into the historical realm in order not to solve, but to clarify, "a problematic in my own existence".¹⁵⁵ To take the distinction seriously then must mean taking it seriously with respect to his own task.

Buber sets up the typology knowing full well its limitations, recognizing that he is disregarding the apocalyptic motifs already to be found among the classic prophets and the prophetic motifs still present in late apocalypics, precisely because he wants to show the essential difference not just theoretically or historically but as having something "of the utmost importance to teach us".¹⁵⁶ He seems to assume that apocalypse is not an authentic aspect of Israel's faith despite the seriousness with which he usually takes the canonical text.

For the prophetic understanding the announcer is "a part of the happening"; there is a correspondence, not casual but dialogical, between the word of God and of man. Man is seen as a "center of surprise in creation";¹⁵⁷ the

future is not fixed; factual change of direction can take place starting in any hour no matter how late; the limits of any hour are to be discovered only by coming up against them. In contrast to this, for the apocalypticist the present historical-biographical hour hardly exists; he writes as though speaking in another time as another person, to a notebook rather than for a particular audience. Only his words and not his body and life are part of his message; he has no real task except to disclose an already decided future.

Wherever man shudders before the menace of his own work and longs to flee from the radically demanding historical hour, there he finds himself near to the apocalyptic vision of a process that cannot be arrested.¹⁵⁸

Buber also speaks of a more optimistic modern apocalyptic, the Marxian, in which an immanent dialectic rather than a transcendent power effects the transition to the new age. Yet

in its modern shape, too, apocalyptic knows nothing of an inner transformation of man that precedes the transformation of the world and co-operates in it; it knows nothing of the prophetic "turning".¹⁵⁹

Still, he does not believe that this inverted apocalyptic is the predominant one today; the specifically modern one is not merely secularized but also thoroughly disenchanted: "The wholly other state of being promised for existence after the end of our world is now annihilated, but the character of the present as late, all too late, has been preserved." ¹⁶⁰ The call to historical responsibility which

underlies this essay makes it itself a prophetic word.

Buber ends the essay by pointing forward to John the Baptist who in an age dominated by apocalyptic fatalism took up again the prophetic call for turning:

He trusted his hearers to trust themselves as capable of the turning that was demanded, and he trusted the human world of his hour to be capable of just this turning, of risk, of giving oneself, of inner transformation.¹⁶¹

And, indeed, the distinction between prophetic and apocalyptic is central to Buber's thesis when he describes the faith of Jesus and Paul in Two Types of Faith.

It may therefore be important to see how other theologians have responded to Buber's typology. The most usual response seems to be that voiced by Max Brod in his essay "Judaism and Christianity in the Work of Martin Buber". Brod says that he agrees with Buber's definitions but not with his evaluations. Buber has identified the prophetic with strength and fruitfulness, the apocalyptic with decadence;¹⁶² but Brod says that where Buber hears inauthenticity, he hears genuine rebellion and terror, the cry of blackest despair.¹⁶³ Both Brod and Taubes would suggest that his presuppositions lead Buber to ignore an important element within Judaism, within the Old Testament. Where Brod, for example, would stress the significance of Ezekiel, the very structure of The Prophetic Faith indicates how little importance Buber assigns to him. Taubes would insist that Buber has a difficult time separating Second Isaiah from the apocalypics.¹⁶⁴

Emil Brunner suggests that it may be because of the way in which Buber minimizes the historical and the institutional in the Old Testament and denies the content aspect of the revelation encounter, that he reads the New Testament as he does.¹⁶⁵ He understands Jesus as a continuation of the Old Testament but not as its fulfillment and cannot see Paul even as a continuation; for that part of Judaism, and the Old Testament, to which Paul is most closely related has already been excluded from the main line of development. Von Balthasar seems to identify Buber's presuppositions here with his "Jewishness" as Hammerstein in his study of Buber's messianism also does: "Judaism must inevitably regard Christianity as different, as foreign, and consequently it cannot help but think in terms of 'the two forms of faith'".¹⁶⁶ This necessity leads, von Balthasar believes, to Buber's holding Judaism to be coincident with a vital prophetic tradition.¹⁶⁷ This insistence "is not simply a move in the dialectical game but the struggle upon the outcome of which his very existence depends."¹⁶⁸ But the focus on the prophetic principle seems to von Balthasar to reduce the post-exilic period to the position of a postscript¹⁶⁹ and to demand, in fact a sacrifice of the forward progressive movement of Jewish history, of all that which is immanent in the Old Testament and comes to light in the Pauline interpretation of faith and law.¹⁷⁰ Buber's attempt to make the Old Covenant a self-sufficient principle,¹⁷¹ his refusal to recognize the direction of Jewish history as a genuine and

necessary development means for von Balthasar that he dissolves history into the philosophy of religion.¹⁷²

Clearly Second Isaiah does stand right on the dividing line but Buber seems rightly to have discerned the difference between the prophetic and the apocalyptic and to have shown how this difference is relevant to our own self-understanding. For him it is prophecy or apocalypse, as for Paul it was faith or works. Luther was quite as free in disregarding the Gospel of James as Buber is in disavowing the apocalyptic writers. Buber insists on this not to block our understanding of historical sequences in the past but for the sake of making us see our historical present as a standing before a future which is not simply a fate. To see how the apocalyptic arises from the prophetic in a particular period of Israel's history is not to accept it as fulfillment. That is too simple an identification of history and God's will. Buber's questioning of the apocalypics was obviously shared by the rabbis who established the Hebraic canon and despite his eschatological focus, by Jesus, too.

Brod has called Two Types of Faith "the most dramatic of Buber's exegetical works" ¹⁷³ because it is structured upon these two conflicting understandings of faith. Like most of the commentators on this book he cannot accept the sharp antitheses on which the book is based; although, of course, Buber, too, seems to recognize that there are no pure forms of either, that in actuality they are as closely intertwined

as I-Thou and I-It always are, that one cannot identify emunah with Judaism nor pistis with Christianity. There seems, indeed, to be more than an echo of that earlier antithesis here since the first type of faith means by faith trusting someone and the other understands it as acknowledging something as true. The contrast is between faith as personal response to person and faith to which one is converted.¹⁷⁴ It is obvious also that Buber recognizes that both are necessary, but that one is primary; yet this is not quite equivalent to that earlier typology since here both ways of belief involve the whole man.

Buber begins with a word of thanks to Rudolf Bultmann for "fundamental instruction in the field of New Testament exegesis", to Albert Schweitzer for what he had shown of the nearness to Israel possible to the Christian, to Rudolf Otto in memory of a meeting, and to Leonhard Ragaz for his vision of a future understanding between Jew and Christian. He says that the book has grown out of a half century's study of the New Testament,

and I think I am a good reader who listens impartially to what is said. From my youth onwards I have found in Jesus my great brother. That Christianity has regarded and does regard him as God and Saviour has always appeared to me a fact of the highest importance which, for his sake and my own I must endeavor to understand. I am more than ever certain that a great place belongs to him in Israel's history of faith and that this place cannot be described by any of the usual categories.¹⁷⁵

Emil Brunner believes that Buber probably comes as close to the Christian faith as a Jew who wills to remain true to his own faith can.¹⁷⁶ Muilenberg also suggests, as seems to me to be true, that here Buber has gone to the limits in his deep recognition of where the Jewish and Christian ways part: "He stands on the frontier that separates".¹⁷⁷ Hammerstein quotes Buber's claim, "We Jews know Jesus from within", and agrees that, though there is much that Buber misses, his not understanding, his standing outside, is a Jewish not a pagan one.¹⁷⁸ The difference between Buber and the liberal critics of whom he often reminds us is that he speaks not just from the prospective of modern man's consciousness but also from that of Jewish faith, that he asks not after the historical Jesus but after the Jesus who lets himself be made part of the Jewish tradition.¹⁷⁹

The search for the Jesus who allows himself to be Understood within the Jewish tradition is one which other Jewish scholars have also felt to be long overdue. For example, Leo Baeck, whose career at many points paralleled Buber's wrote of Jesus:

This man could have developed as he came to be only on the soil of Judaism; and only on this soil, too, could he find his disciples and followers as they were. Here, alone, in this Jewish sphere, in this Jewish atmosphere of trust and longing, could this man live his life and meet his death - A Jew among Jews. Jewish history and Jewish reflection may not pass him by nor ignore him.¹⁸⁰

Already in the 'twenties, Joseph Klausner in his

Jesus of Nazareth, had sought to relate Jesus to his Jewish background and then to define that which separates him from it. Klausner believed that it was time for Jews to recognize in Jesus one of their own great teachers of morality who had, however, been misled by his conviction of the nearness of eschatological fulfillment and of his own messiahship in the direction of a quite unJewish separation of the religious from the secular and thus had prepared his rejection by Judaism. Klausner's exegeses indicate that there are no ethical teachings of Jesus which cannot also be found in some contemporary Jewish source, either biblical, apocalyptic, talmudic or midrashic, but he maintains that Jesus' over-emphasis on the ethical to the exclusion of the ceremonial and civic aspects of the law made him unable to appreciate the Pharasaic aim of hallowing existing conditions. The eschatological foundation of Jesus' ethics led to an extremist and individualist emphasis, to an increasingly negative attitude toward the present world. For Klausner the first distinctively Christian teaching seems to be Jesus': "Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's." 181

Like Klausner, Baeck sees Christianity as more "romantic" than Judaism because of its focus on the world beyond. Like Buber, Baeck focuses on Paul's conversion as the decisive turning point from a theo-centric to a Christ-centered faith. For him as for Buber what separates Judaism and Christianity is the Pauline pistis rather than Jesus' eschatologically based ignoring of historical reality.

Perhaps even more clearly than Buber he sees how Paul, also, can only be understood as a Jew and how wholly Jewish is Paul's understanding of the Damascus vision as a call, as entailing a mission. He sees that Paul not only never abandons the Jewish scholar's analogical method nor his need to justify his theology by scripture but also that

Paul never thought of rejecting or disregarding his Jewish people. It as his people, which he could not forsake without forsaking his own faith, which he could not dismiss without dismissing his hope and his love. Or, to quote his own words: "I say then, hath God cast away his people? God forbid." (Rom. 11.1).¹⁸²

Yet because Paul believed that Jesus was the Messiah he had to fight "not against 'law' but against the 'present' validity of the law",¹⁸³ for according to a traditional doctrine we stand either in the Days of the Messiah or in the Days of the Torah. "Not the 'law' as such but the messiah, his presence, his actuality, were at stake."¹⁸⁴ Baeck believes that Paul's emphasis on the now of salvation leads to a focus on the experience of mystery, of the knowledge of what is real, as over against the experience of commandment, the knowledge of what is to be realized. Therefore Paul comes to formulate faith not as demand but as a doctrine of salvation, and Christianity becomes a religion based on sacrament (the present experiencing of union) and on dogma. Thus Baeck, like Buber and like Klausner, sees Judaism and Christianity as representing two types of faith; but where Klausner and Baeck seem to understand their analyses as polemics directed against

Christianity,¹⁸⁵ Buber seems to want to understand Christian faith and to make Christians recognize the importance of emuna in their own faith. Often Buber's project seems to bring him closer to Bultmann than to Baeck.

Let us turn now to Two Types of Faith and see how Buber approaches the forms of the New Testament. He seeks to understand Jesus in relation to the Old Testament figures of servant and prophet; he finds in Paul a way of speaking about God, of naming him, which is radically different from the Hebrew Bible's language patterns. We are interested in seeing what the hermeneutical method developed in response to the Old Testament discovers in the New.

Hammerstein asserts that Buber uses a different methodology for the New Testament than for the Old, that whereas in the Hebrew scripture he had accepted every part of the given text, he now begins with a critical exegesis which emphasizes the contradictions, especially between the synoptic tradition and the Pauline and Johanne writings, rather than the latent unity. He concludes that since Buber has no belief in the unity of the New Testament and its unity with the Old that he cannot read it right, that because Buber does not believe in the resurrection he is led to insist on a separation of Jesus and Christ which the New Testament does not allow.¹⁸⁶

I would, however, agree with Brod that Buber reads the New Testament with the same critical attention to wordsound

and word meaning, to style and rhythm and repetition that uniquely distinguishes his other Biblical exegesis.¹⁸⁷

There is, after all, the same attention to detail, especially to the key-words. Buber traces the path by which the Old Testament emunah becomes the pistis of Christian theology, just as he had followed the development from the theocratic conception of God's rulership to the eschatological understanding.

For example, note how Buber begins. He takes the narrative in Mark 9.14-29 about the healing of a boy possessed by demons: "The whole narrative is based, in accordance with the Old Testament pattern, on the two key-words 'to believe' and 'to be able'." ¹⁸⁸ Buber then seeks to discover what the account reveals about the relation between these two key concepts. He wants us to see that faith here means not believing in but believing, that Jesus is trying to indicate that this is the eschatological hour in which God's power draws nigh. It is trust in that nearing which makes all things possible. In the second chapter Buber turns to Mark 1.15 which he translates: "The appointed time is fulfilled and God's rule has come near. Turn and trust the message", in order to emphasize the Old Testament roots of the three principles of the message: mamlakah, teshuvah, and emunah and to show the inadequacy of translations which would understand God's kingly rule as implying a superterrestrial space and which would reduce teshuvah to repentance and emunah to believing in.

Here, again, it is not a faith in God but a faith to God, fidelity and trust, which is intended.

Next Buber, still focusing on the Marcan Jesus though he never defends this choice and never here considers the form critical questions as to the double *sitz-im-leben* of these accounts, considers Jesus' question to Peter. Buber believes this "Who am I?" to have been a real question. He contrasts it to the question of the Johannine Jesus, "Do you believe in me?" which seems to him to make of faith a work demanded of man. He points here to these Synoptic and Johannine dialogues as two stages along one road:

The gain was the most sublime of all theologies; it was procured at the expense of the plain, concrete, and situation-bound dialogicism of the original man of the Bible, who found eternity, not in the super-temporal spirit, but in the depth of the actual moment.¹⁸⁹

Although Buber wants to include Jesus within Judaism he recognizes that the first step toward the theological understanding was taken by Jesus himself. In his reading of the Sermon on the Mount he, like Klausner, points out that although Jesus' sayings derive their light from the world of Judaism they nevertheless outshine it because the eschatological situation heightens both demand and possibility.¹⁹⁰ Nonetheless Buber believes that it is evident that Jesus "considers the Torah capable of fulfillment, not merely in accordance with its wording, but in the original intention of its revelation."¹⁹¹ Buber considers Jesus' image of

the world prophetic, whereas Paul's is apocalyptic because for him the contradictions of human life have assumed the character of a fate. Buber says:

Bultmann's view that the preaching of Jesus is in line with the apocalyptic hope, the presupposition of which is "the pessimistic-dualistic perception of the satanic corruption of the whole course of the world" seems to me insufficiently founded.....Like the prophets, Jesus sees this aeon as that in which the powers struggle, not as that of a rule of evil. In the world there is a kingdom of Satan which opposes the coming of the kingdom of God, but the world only contains it, it is not it. Therefore the one called to overcome it can be chosen from mankind itself.¹⁹²

Because for him, Jesus' preaching is not so deeply affected by apocalyptic mythology, Buber feels less need to "demythologize" Jesus' proclamation than does Bultmann. Jesus' own images seem to him to body forth not simply to clothe his call for decision. Apocalyptic imagery, because it is allegorical, invites demythologization, but the prophet's language is metaphorical, his meanings are wedded to his forms.

Jesus recognized himself as the prophet of the coming kingdom and as its appointed human center; he learned that "the power granted him today was not that sufficient for the work of the mediator of the kingdom. He knew himself as existing in the state of concealment."¹⁹³ Buber believes that Jesus understood himself in relation to the conception of Second Isaiah as a bearer of the Messianic hidden-ness but that he comes to believe in his removal from the state of concealment and in his own return as the triumphant figure

of Daniel's vision.¹⁹⁴ The change in attitude which is expressed by this shift of metaphor he assigns to Jesus' last days, though Buber recognizes that here the story "is so thickly overlaid by dogmatic certainty that one cannot venture any attempt at the reconstruction of his genuine utterances from this period."¹⁹⁵ Buber believes that in breaking the seal of secrecy Jesus allowed the mythical images prepared by the apocalypics to seize him in their form.¹⁹⁶ Yet Buber's use of the Gospel of Mark leads us to ask again as we did in his Old Testament interpretations earlier, whether he is not willing to include too much as belonging to the historical kernel. Does he pay enough attention to the fact that even the synoptic gospels are kerygma? Does he appreciate deeply enough the forming activity of Mark's theological imagination?

In turning to Paul, Buber seeks to trace the movement from Jesus' summons to follow himself to Paul's summons to have faith in Christ. Such faith, Buber says, means faith in Christ's resurrection and so is a "belief that". He quotes Paul, "If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain." For Buber this is the point of separation; especially since "the resurrection of an individual person does not belong to the realm of ideas of the Jewish world."¹⁹⁷ Buber indicates that he has read Bultmann's Theology of the New Testament but that he remains unconvinced "that Paul understood pistis primarily as an act of obedience."¹⁹⁸

Although his understanding of Jesus in many ways echoes that of Bultmann's, Jesus and the Word (as indeed, the Catholic scholars, von Balthasar and Gerard Sloyin,¹⁹⁹ are quick to point out), Buber finds he cannot follow Bultmann's interpretation of Paul. Buber intimates that his reading of Paul is dependent on Emil Brunner's The Mediator,²⁰⁰ yet Brunner asserts that he would join Buber in rejecting the Paul of Buber's presentation. For those of us who come to Paul through Luther, it seems deeply ironic that the Paul who understood the dichotomy of law and grace so radically as to recognize that any conception of faith as a "belief that" would simply make it into another work, a human achievement, should here be read as the representative of what Buber calls the pistis type of faith. Brunner says that Buber couldn't hear in Paul what Luther was the first to recognize, but that we can hardly reproach him for this, since Christian theology also for so long (and really still today) hasn't quite managed to understand Christian faith as primarily obedience.²⁰¹

Buber has almost turned Paul's own antithesis between the Judaic and Christian types of faith back upon him. He seeks to make us recognize the injustice of Paul's description of Old Testament faith as a faith of works and to bring us to see how the Pauline conception of grace springs from a misinterpretation of the dialogical relation between man and God as a cause and effect one. Brunner suggests that it may be because Buber doesn't have enough appreciation of human sinfulness, even as this is recognized in Judaism, to enable

him to understand justifying faith.²⁰² Yet in his essay, "Guilt and Guilt Feelings", Buber speaks of man as "the being who is capable of becoming guilty" not only toward himself but "toward the being that exists over against him."²⁰³ He says that it is only through the recognition of the irreversibility of what has been done and the humble perseverance in the self-identification of the one who recognizes the guilt with the one who bears it that one comes to the way which leads to reconciliation. He shows how for Kafka's Joseph K who persists in denying his guilt, confession would have been the door swinging open.²⁰⁴ Clearly Buber knows what it is to address God as the "one over against him who receives his confession, answers it, 'forgives' him."²⁰⁵ Yet for Buber man is not the being who is guilty. In Adam's sin he sees no "must-sin" and hence no original sin.²⁰⁶ Therefore, Buber can speak of man as "capable of illuminating his guilt"²⁰⁷ and can attribute a significance to man's "beginning" which Paul can not. Glatzer (despite the fact that he, too, finds something lacking in Buber's analysis of the place of the law in Old Testament faith) applauds Buber's affirmation of the Jew's freedom in the law against Paul's lack of freedom under the law.²⁰⁸

In Two Types of Faith Buber tries to point to that which separates him from Paul by showing how differently each understands Genesis 15.6. For Buber, Abraham "continues to trust God" and God "deems" this as his "proving true"; for Paul, who knows only the Hellenized not the Hebrew text:

Abraham does not believe "in" God, in the sense of a perseverance in Him, but he believes Him - which.....denotes an act of the soul in the moment described. More important still is the fact that instead of the divine consideration, deeming, ratification, there has come into being an attributing, a category in the judicial computation of items of guilt and innocence against each other, and in connection with this instead of the proving true, a "righteousness", the rightness of conduct which justifies the individual before God.²⁰⁹

By this change, Buber believes

we are displaced from the high-ground where God receives Abraham's attitude of faith, his persistence in him, as proving true, to the deep valley, where the act of faith is entered in the book of judgement, as the decisive fact of the case in favor of the person judged.²¹⁰

Likewise, Buber finds, Paul's understanding of Torah as Law takes away from it its vital character as God's instruction in his way and makes it into a separate objectivium, though Buber admits the tendency towards objectifying the Torah has its beginnings in Old Testament times and that the struggle against making the gesture independent of the intended surrender to the divine will goes back to early Israel and continues even into Hasidism.²¹¹ Nevertheless this is altogether different from the Pauline understanding that the Torah is given not in order to be fulfilled "but rather through its incapacity of fulfillment to call forth sin.... and so prepare the way for grace."²¹² Buber also cannot recognize in Paul's description of God's wrath the fatherly anger of the Old Testament God.²¹³

Yet the central issue is still that call to "faith in Christ". Buber recognizes that "the work of deification was a process, a compulsion, not arbitrariness";²¹⁴ he sees that John and Paul want to express their belief "that here no new image of God is set up, but the old, until now partly hidden one, has been revealed in its completeness."²¹⁵ For Paul, Christ

is the true image, in which He Who remains invisible becomes visible. So Paul contended for both things at once, for loyalty to the highest possible conception of his Master and for the "unweakened" maintenance of monotheism.²¹⁶

But from the point of view of Israel this is indeed a new image of God, for Israel's God "ever gives Himself to be seen in the phenomena of nature and history, and remains invisible."²¹⁷ To the Jew it must seem that the Christian image "conceals the imageless One",²¹⁸ and thus no longer allows God to appear as he will. The Christian, Sloyin says, finds exactly the reverse to be true: "He is convinced that were he to refuse belief in God-made-man, he would deny to God the right 'to appear as He will'".²¹⁹

Buber can accept what Bultmann calls the Christ-event as a revelatory moment in history but not as that which puts an end to history and swallows it up. He believes that for the Jew there is no caesura to history; there is only a moveable circling midpoint which cannot be pinned to any set time for it is the moment in which the individual hears the Word addressing him.²²⁰ Bultmann would say that since for

Buber the one whom Christians regard as the Christ is a figure of the past, the Christ-event, the event whose essence is its meaning is inaccessible to him. For Bultmann, Christ is the Word of God; in hearing this Word with faith an event takes place in man which is the meaning of the word. The Word does not speak about the relation of God to man but the relation arises with the Word. The actual historical character of the New Testament events is not their having taken place, their past-ness, but their significance for the present, the witness that in these events God turns with grace to man. Buber also believes that we understand the meaning of revelation "only when we are the ones who are addressed..... This is its claim on me and so this is its meaning as far as I am concerned." ²²¹ Yet for Buber the name for the God who thus addresses man is "Eheyeh asher eheyeh", I shall be as I shall be, and he cannot see how Bultmann who recognizes that "God is always the God who comes" ²²² can identify God's Word with the Christ-event without making it a relation to a past event.

In their understanding of revelation as a call to decision Buber and Bultmann are very close. Buber says: "Man receives not a 'content' but a meaning, which does not wish to be explained but only to be done by us." ²²³ Bultmann agrees: "There is no obedience to God in a vacuum.....no obedience which is directed immediately toward God"; ²²⁴ "there is no obedience to God which does not prove itself in the concrete situation of meeting one's neighbor." ²²⁵

Nevertheless Buber, as a Jew, cannot see why for Bultmann this call to decision as it meets me now is the Christ-event, though his attentive reading of the Gospels and of contemporary Christian theologians like Bultmann, with whom he shares so much may help make clear to both Christians and Jews what it is that separates the two types of faith. For Bultmann, the Christ-event is, to use Gerhard Ebeling's words, "the word-event which becomes the source of understanding of all word-events." 226 Buber still says as he said in I and Thou: "I do not believe in a self-naming of God, a self-definition of God before men..... 'He' is also a metaphor, but 'Thou' is not." 227

Notes for Chapter Seven:

1. Israel and the World, p. 243.
2. Kohn, op. cit., p. 454.
3. Ibid., p. 416.
4. Ibid., p. 424.
5. Between Man and Man, p. vii.
6. Ibid., p. 52.
7. Ibid., p. 57.
8. Ibid., p. 61, 60.
9. Ibid., p. 65, 66.
10. Israel and the World, p. 212.
11. Ibid., p. 200.
12. Pointing the Way, p. 190.
13. Ibid., p. 178.
14. Ibid., p. 182.
15. Ibid., p. 142 ff.
16. Buber elaborates the significance of this "how" in the area of social action in Paths to Utopia.
17. Israel and the World, p. 250.
18. Ibid., p. 190.
19. Included in Between Man and Man, p. 118-206.
20. Cf. Jaspers, Karl, The Great Philosophers, Harcourt, Brace and World, New York, 1957.
21. Werke, Vol. 1, p. 303.
22. Between Man and Man, p. 118.
23. Ibid., 123, 124.
24. Ibid., p. 125.
25. Ibid., p. 136.

26. Ibid., p. 167.
27. Ibid., p. 168.
28. Ibid., p. 198.
29. Ibid., p. 203.
30. Buber, Martin, The Prophetic Faith, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1960, p. 7.
31. Schillp and Friedman, op. cit., p. 365.
32. Werke, Vol. 2, p. 515 ff.
33. Good and Evil, from "Foreword", no pagination.
34. Hammerstein, op. cit.
35. Werke, Vol. 2, p. 490.
36. Prophetic Faith, p. 5.
37. Ibid., p. 57.
38. Ibid., p. 2.
39. Ibid., p. 23.
40. Ibid., p. 88.
41. Werke, Vol. 2. p. 875.
42. Schillp and Friedman, op. cit., p. 371.
43. Prophetic Faith, p. 38.
44. Buber, Martin, Moses, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1958, p. 85.
45. Prophetic Faith, p. 6.
46. Ibid., p. 4.
47. Ibid., p. 35.
48. Werke, Vol. 2, p. 880.
49. Prophetic Faith, p. 36.
50. Werke, Vol. 2, p. 882.
51. Ibid., p. 885.

52. Prophetic Faith, p. 46.
53. Moses, p. 76.
54. Ibid., p. 16.
55. Prophetic Faith, p. 7.
56. In Commentary, June 1950, Vol. 9, No. 6, p. 502-566.
57. Good and Evil, p. 66.
58. Ibid., p. 116, 117.
59. Legend of the Baal-Shem, p. 17.
60. Prophetic Faith, p. 5.
61. Schillp and Friedman, op. cit. p. 370.
62. Moses, p. 18.
63. Ibid., p. 63, 64.
64. Ibid., p. 14.
65. Ibid., p. 19.
66. Israel and the World, p. 94.
67. Moses, p. 10.
68. Ibid., p. 39.
69. Prophetic Faith, p. 27.
70. Werke, Vol. 2, p. 375.
71. Quoted in Hammerstein, op. cit., p. 115.
72. von Balthasar, Hans Urs, Martin Buber and Christianity, MacMillan, New York, 1961, p. 40, 41.
73. Werke, Vol. 2, p. 608, 650, 670, 644.
74. Schillp and Friedman, op. cit., p. 381.
75. Ibid., p. 372.
76. Werke, Vol. 2, p. 546.
77. Schillp and Friedman, op. cit. p. 411.
78. Prophetic Faith, p. 59.

79. Werke, Vol. 2, p. 776.
80. Ibid., p. 811.
81. Prophetic Faith, p. 85.
82. Ibid., p. 234.
83. Ibid., p. 111.
84. Ibid., p. 120.
85. Ibid., p. 121.
86. Ibid., p. 144.
87. Ibid., p. 153.
88. Ibid., p. 147.
89. Ibid., p. 150.
90. Ibid., p. 164.
91. Ibid., p. 165.
92. Ibid., loc. cit.
93. Ibid., p. 175.
94. Ibid., p. 176.
95. Ibid., p. 182.
96. Ibid., p. 205.
97. Hammerstein, op. cit., p. 22.
98. Prophetic Faith, p. 224.
99. Ibid., p. 230.
100. Good and Evil, p. 3.
101. Prophetic Faith, p. 226.
102. Ibid., p. 229.
103. Ibid., p. 231.
104. Ibid., p. 232.
105. Ibid., p. 210.

106. Ibid., p. 211.
107. Pointing the Way, p. 109.
108. Prophetic Faith, p. 211.
109. Good and Evil, p. 11.
110. Pointing the Way, p. 199.
111. Prophetic Faith, p. 205.
112. Which I detect also in Ernst Cassirer and his "philosophy of symbolic forms" despite his recognition of the peculiarity of the mythic mode of representation.
113. Voegelin, op. cit., p. 195.
114. Brooks, Cleanth. The Well Wrought Urn. Reynal & Hitchcock, New York, 1947, p. 188.
115. Werner Jaeger's study of Plato elaborates this same insight: Plato was brought to the creation of the dialogue form through the need to re-present Socrate's search for truth through conversation.
116. Voegelin, op. cit., p. 175, 176.
117. Ibid., p. 124.
118. Eichrodt, Walther, Theology of the Old Testament, Vol. 1, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1961, p. 17.
119. Ibid., p. 14.
120. Ibid., p. 15.
121. Baalshem, p. xiii.
122. Eichrodt, op. cit., p. 28.
123. Cf. article by Will Herberg, "Five Meanings of the Word 'Historical'" in the Christian Scholar, Winter, 1964.
124. Eichrodt, op. cit., p. 34.
125. Eichrodt, op. cit., p. 66.
126. Ibid., p. 69.
127. Ibid., p. 520.

128. von Rad, op. cit., p. 116.
129. Ibid., p. 121.
130. Ibid., p. 125.
131. Ibid., p. 107.
132. Ibid., p. 108.
133. Ibid., p. 109.
134. Ibid., loc. cit.
135. Eichrodt, op. cit., p. 513.
136. Voegelin, op. cit., p. 130.
137. von Rad, op. cit., p. 108.
138. Ibid., p. 117.
139. Eichrodt, op. cit., p. 50.
140. Ibid., p. 52.
141. Bonhoeffer, D., Letters and Papers from Prison, SCM Press, London, 1953, p. 158, 162.
142. Eichrodt, op. cit., p. 52.
143. Ibid., p. 55.
144. von Rad, op. cit., p. 115.
145. Cf. Norman Snaith's book, Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament. Schocken Books, New York, 1964.
146. Voegelin, op. cit., p. 164.
147. Daniel, p. 63.
148. Blackmur, Lion, p. 224.
149. Auden, op. cit., pp. 58-9.
150. Good and Evil, p. 131, 132.
151. Pointing the Way, p. 198.
152. Note the same recognition of a distinctive apocalyptic literary method in D. S. Russell's The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic, Westminster Press, 1964, esp. part 1.

153. Ibid., p. 206.
154. Good and Evil, p. 91, 92.
155. Pointing the Way, p. 192.
156. Ibid., p. 194.
157. Ibid., p. 198.
158. Ibid., p. 203.
159. Ibid., p. 204.
160. Ibid., loc. cit.
161. Ibid., p. 207.
162. Ibid., p. 203.
163. Schillp and Friedman, op. cit., p. 317
164. Ibid., p. 406.
165. Ibid., p. 308.
166. von Balthasar, op. cit., p. 24.
167. Ibid., p. 36.
168. Ibid., p. 67.
169. Ibid., p. 39.
170. Ibid., p. 44.
171. Ibid., p. 109.
172. Ibid., p. 64.
173. Schillp and Friedman, op. cit., p. 324.
174. Buber, Martin, Two Types of Faith, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1961, p. 7-9.
175. Ibid., p. 12.
176. Schillp and Friedman, op. cit., p. 306.
177. Ibid., p. 365.
178. Hammerstein, op. cit., p. 64.

179. Ibid., p. 52.
180. Baeck, Leo, Judaism and Christianity, Meridian Books, Philadelphia, 1958, p. 101.
181. Klausner, Joseph, Jesus of Nazareth. Beacon Press, Boston, 1964, esp. Part 2.
182. Baeck, op. cit., p. 164.
183. Ibid., p. 163.
184. Ibid., loc. cit.
185. Ibid., p. 3, from Walter Kaufmann's introductory chapter.
186. Hammerstein, op. cit., p. 59, 54.
187. Schillp and Friedman, op. cit., p. 318.
188. Two Types, p. 17
189. Ibid., p. 34.
190. Ibid., p. 75.
191. Ibid., p. 79.
192. Ibid., p. 89.
193. Ibid., p. 104.
194. Ibid., p. 107.
195. Ibid., p. 108.
196. Schillp and Friedman, op. cit., p. 409.
197. Two Types, p. 128
198. Ibid., p. 97
199. Sloyin, Gerard S., "Buber and the Significance of Jesus", in The Bridge, Vol. 3, p. 215.
200. Two Types, p. 163.
201. Schillp and Friedman, op. cit., p. 306, 310.
202. Ibid., p. 308.
203. Buber, Martin, The Knowledge of Man, Harper & Row, New York, 1965, p. 146, 147.

- 204. Ibid., p. 143.
- 205. Ibid., p. 137.
- 206. Good and Evil, p. 79.
- 207. Knowledge of Man, p. 146.
- 208. Schillp and Friedman, op. cit., p. 361.
- 209. Two Types, p. 46.
- 210. Ibid., p. 47.
- 211. Ibid., p. 57.
- 212. Ibid., p. 80.
- 213. Ibid., p. 139.
- 214. Ibid., p. 130.
- 215. Ibid., p. 129.
- 216. Ibid., p. 134.
- 217. Ibid., p. 130.
- 218. Ibid., p. 131.
- 219. Sloyan, op. cit., p. 213.
- 220. Israel and the World, p. 94.
- 221. Ibid., p. 81.
- 222. Bultmann, Rudolph, Primitive Christianity, Meridian Books, New York, 1957, p. 145.
- 223. I and Thou, p. 110.
- 224. Bultmann, Rudolph, Jesus and the Word, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1951, p. 18.
- 225. Bultmann, Rudolph, Theology of the New Testament, Vol. 1, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1951, p. 18.
- 226. Ebeling, Gerhard, Word and Faith, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1963, p. 322.
- 227. I and Thou, p. 111, 112.

Chapter Eight

Theology and Imagination.

A tale:

After many years of great poverty which had never shaken his faith in God, Rabbi Eisik, son of Rabbi Yekel in Cracow, dreamed someone bade him look for a treasure in Prague, under the bridge which leads to the king's palace. When the dream recurred a third time, Rabbi Eisik prepared for the journey and set out for Prague. But the bridge was guarded day and night and he did not dare to start digging. Nevertheless he went to the bridge every morning and kept talking around it until evening.

Finally the captain of the guards, who had been watching him, asked him in a kindly way whether he was looking for something or waiting for somebody. Rabbi Eisik told him of the dream which had brought him here from a far-away country. The captain laughed: "And so to please the dream, you poor fellow wore out your shoes to come here! As for having faith in dreams, if I had had it, I should have had to get going when a dream once told me to go to Cracow and dig for treasure under the stove in the room of a Jew - Eisik, son of Yekel, that was the name! Eisik, son of Yekel! I can just imagine what it would be like, how I should have to try every house over there, where one half of the Jews are named Eisek, and the other Yekel!" And he laughed again. Rabbi Eisik bowed, traveled home, dug up the treasure from under the stove, and built the House of Prayer which is called "Reb Eisik's Shul".¹

In the years after Buber's move to Jerusalem he returns to his work of retelling the Hasidic legends begun more than forty years before. In his 1946 preface to Tales of the Hasidim he writes:

Along with much else, I owe the urge to this new and more comprehensive composition to the air of this land. Our sages say that it makes one wise; to me it has granted a different gift: the strength to make a new beginning. I had regarded my work on the Hasidic legends as completed. This book is the outcome of a beginning.²

Buber returns to artistic modes of communication not only in these Tales but also in a chronicle novel and a mystery play. These works express his understanding of a theological imagining which can be distinguished from the fantasizing imagination which he rejected long ago. Buber is convinced that religion cannot be demythologized, that an objectifying theology inevitably leads to the "eclipse of God". He now understands the work of the imagination not as a shaping of visual images but as a responding in words in which speech and meaning are wedded to one another. The mythical no longer refers to a poetic unfolding; it does not even any longer mean the myth of the calling, the myth of dialogical relationship, so much as it means the myth of the turning, of tsuvah, of dramatic reversal. Buber's return to these more directly imaginative modes reminds us of T. S. Eliot's lines:

We shall not cease from exploration
 And the end of all our exploring
 Will be to arrive where we started
 And know the place for the first time.³

Buber relates his aim in his new beginning with the Hasidic legends to the central theme of these later years:

"I was concerned.....with restoring immediacy to the relation between man and God, with helping to end 'the eclipse of God'".⁴ He says that his undertaking was neither "a literary project",⁵ nor a work of historical scholarship which approaches the former religious tradition in a spirit of objectivity and detachment and seeks to be as exact and as comprehensive as possible.⁶ Rather, his

way of restoring a great buried heritage of faith to the light (has been) to recapture a sense of the power that once gave it the capacity to take hold of and vitalize the life of diverse classes of people. Such an approach derives from the desire to convey to our time the force of a former life of faith and to help our age renew its ruptured bond with the Absolute.⁷

Buber believes that "Hasidism has its word to speak in the crisis of Western man", a word which might heal "the sickening of our contact with things and beings,"⁸ which might remind us of the purpose for which we are on earth.⁹ Although his relation to Hasidism is no longer that of an observer, and although he knows that its teaching is there that one may learn it and its way that one might walk on it, Buber also knows that he himself cannot speak as a Hasid:

I could not become a Hasid. It would have been an unpermissible masquerading had I taken on

the Hasidic manner of life - I who had a wholly other relation to Jewish tradition, since I must distinguish in my innermost being between what is commanded me and what is not commanded me.¹⁰

He recognizes, too, that the commission to witness to the teaching of Hasidism is a carrying of it into the world "against its will".¹¹

Hasidism wishes to work exclusively within the boundaries of Jewish tradition and to concern no one outside of them. It was.... something that hid itself in Hasidism and would, or rather should, go out into the world.¹²

Yet he has never sought to "liberate this teaching" from its "confessional limitations":

Taking such a "universal path" would have been for me pure arbitrariness. In order to speak to the world what I have heard, I am not bound to step into the street. I may remain standing in the door of my ancestral house.¹³

That his presentation of Hasidism has been a selective one he himself admits; Gershon Scholem and his disciple, Rivka Schatz-Uffenheimer, both criticize Buber for the "modern" and "subjectivist" turn of his interpretation. Scholem says:

I am convinced that his selection corresponds as far as possible to his own sense of his message. I am not convinced, however, that the sense of his message, as he has formulated it in his later writings, is that of Hasidism.¹⁴

They believe that his greatest mistake arises from his

conviction that the most authentic source of Hasidic teaching is to be found in the legend rather than in the earlier formulations which are more theoretic, mostly Biblical commentary and homilies. This leads him to discount the significance of kabbalistic lore as a creative impulse in Hasidism. They believe that this one-sided focus, which they find has become more pronounced as Buber has more clearly developed his "subjectivist philosophy of dialogue", reflects Buber's "religious anarchism", his emphasis on "the how" and on intensity, and minimizes both the strictness of the Hasidic relation to the Torah and the importance of theurgic gnosticism.¹⁵ Thus, although Buber recognizes the central place in Hasidism of the kabbalistic myth of the holy sparks, he allows little room for the "spiritualizing" interpretation of the elevation of the sparks which aims at removing the worldly character of things in order to commune with what is hidden in them. Hasidism, Buber believes, calls not for such nullification, but for transformation, for hallowing.

Schatz-Uffenheimer admits that Buber hasn't created his vision of the affirmative life-relation of the Hasidism out of the air, rather, she believes, he has let himself be bewitched by the inner richness of the Hasidic aphorism in which everything is said in the exaggerated form of a streak of lightning.¹⁶ Both she and Scholem believe that Buber has focused on just those sources which lie most open to misinterpretation. Yet in his own book, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, written in 1941, Scholem, though admittedly more

interested than Buber ever has been in relating Hasidism to the history of Jewish mysticism and to seeing it as a stage in a process which also includes Lurianic Kabbalism and Sabbatianism,¹⁷ characterizes Hasidism much as Buber does. He recognizes that "this burst of mystical energy was unproductive of new religious ideas, to say nothing of new theories of mystical knowledge"; that, therefore, the new element must be sought "in the experience of an inner revival".¹⁸ He sees that the leader, the zaddik, is set apart by his character rather than his learning; he repeats a Hasid's confession, "I did not go to the 'maggid' of Meseritz to learn Torah from him but to watch him tie his boot-laces." ¹⁹ Most significantly, he concludes:

When all is said and done it is this myth which represents the greatest creative expression of Hasidism. In the place of the theoretical disquisition, or at least side by side with it, you get the Hasidic tale. Around the lives of the great Zaddikim, the bearers of that irrational something which their mode of life expressed, legends were spun often in their own lifetime.....To tell a story of the deeds of the saints has become a new religious value and there is something of the celebration of a religious rite about it. Not a few great Zaddikim have laid down the whole treasure of their ideas in such tales. Their Torah took the form of an inexhaustible fountain of story-telling. Nothing at all has remained theory, everything has become a story.²⁰

It is to this inexhaustible fountain that Buber has sought to bring us. As Walter Kaufmann suggests, here the question of historical accuracy may not be quite the right one. What we are given is what Buber heard in Hasidism,

though it is true that others have not heard it quite so. That he added nothing does not mean that he gave back what he found; through cutting and polishing he has brought these tales to their fulfillment; they cannot be improved by shortening; he has given them their definitive form.²¹

Buber's concentration on Hasidism's legendary anecdotes has been a self-conscious and purposive "act of judgment with rests not upon the customary objectivity of the scholar" nor upon "mere subjectivity" but "upon the reliability of the man in the face of his special task": he has sought to select, to filter out, the vital and vitalizing elements.²²

I have not converted the message of Hasidism into solid concepts; I was concerned to preserve its mythical as well as its epic essence. I cannot concur with the postulate of the hour-to demythologize religion. For myth is not the subsequent clothing of a truth of faith; it is the unarbitrary testimony of the image-making vision and the image-making memory, and the conceptual cannot be refined out of it.²³

Buber begins Tales of the Hasidim with the assertion that "one of the most vital aspects of the Hasidic movement is that the Hasidim tell one another stories about their leaders"; they transmitted these experiences "with such actuality that the words in themselves become events."²⁴ Perhaps the best illustration is the story with which Scholem closes his book:

When the Baal-Shem had a difficult task before him, he would go to a certain place in the woods, light a fire and meditate in prayer -

and what he had set out to perform was done. When a generation later the "maggid" of Mesertiz was faced with the same task he would go to the same place in the woods and say: We can no longer light the fire, but we can still speak the prayers - and what he wanted done became reality. Again a generation later Rabbi Moshe Leib of Sassov had to perform this task. And he too went into the woods and said: We can no longer light a fire, nor do we know the secret meditations belonging to the prayer, but we do know the place in the woods to which it all belongs - and that must be sufficient; and sufficient it was. But when another generation had passed and Rabbi Israel of Rishin was called upon to perform the task, he sat down on his golden chair in his castle and said: We cannot light the fire, we cannot speak the prayers we do not know the place, but we can tell the story of how it was done. And, the storyteller adds, the story which he told had the same effect as the actions of the other three.²⁵

In most cultures, Buber says, the legend has developed side by side with the literary form of the short story, whereas the Jewish legends were not given a literary form until our own time; in explaining why he implies a criticism of his own early "formations":

The inner tempo of the Hasidim is frequently too impassioned, too violent for the calm form of (the style of tales current among the people), a form which could not contain the abundance of what they had to say. And so the Hasidim never shaped their legend into a precious vessel; with few exceptions it never became either the work of an individual artist or a work of folk-art; it remained unformed.²⁶

He is now highly critical of the kind of expansion and coloring which the Grimm brothers had found permissible in their rendering of German folk stories; and though he finds it most expedient "to begin by giving up the available form (or

rather formlessness)" of the extant texts he seeks to "reconstruct the events in question with the greatest accuracy" and "in a form suited to the subject-matter", and has learned that the more "naked" his telling is, "the more adequately it fulfills its function." ²⁷ The tales are mostly anecdotes, highly condensed narratives in which events are reported so as to culminate in a significant saying; they report actions of the zaddikim which lead into dicta, or dialogues in which the zaddik conveys his teaching. Buber has arranged the tales in order to illuminate the individual characters of the zaddikim and to give the pattern of their lives, in biographical but not always in chronological order, "since this would have obscured rather than clarified the total effect I had in mind." ²⁸

The Hasidic tales present "a world of legendary reality" a world created by the recollection of fervent human beings of what they perceived as reality and related as such, "unalloyed by invention and whimsy"; an account not of themselves but of what stirred them. ²⁹ Here again is the work of that same creative memory which Buber pointed to in the Moses tradition and whose role he has recognized in the shaping of his own life.

Perhaps we can most clearly see the kind of "cutting and polishing" which Buber now finds appropriate if we contrast his telling with that of a translation in the scholar's sense, Louis I. Newman's Hasidic Anthology. Some idea of the

difference is implied by the very ordering of the books: Newman's contains more aphorisms than anecdotes and, tales and teachings alike, arranges them alphabetically in terms of such categories as: the After-Life, Borrowing and Lending, Circumcision, Diligence, Exile and Redemption, Fools and Foolishness. Sometimes there is very little difference between Buber's translation and Newman's except that Newman's version seems a shade more moralistic:

Buber: Once the Baal-Shem stopped on the threshold of a House of Prayer and refused to go in. "I cannot go in," he said, "it is crowded with teachings and prayers from wall to wall and from floor to ceiling. How could there be room for me?" And when he saw that those around him were staring at him and did not know what he meant, he added: "The words from the lips of those whose teaching and praying does not come from the hearts lifted to heaven, cannot rise, but fill the house from wall to wall and from floor to ceiling."³⁰

Newman: The Besht was about to enter a synagogue but he halted at the door and exclaimed: "This place is overfilled with prayers and learning!" "Why then do you hesitate to enter such a holy place?" inquired his disciples. "Were this a truly sacred place," replied the Besht, "the prayers and learning would have ascended heavenward, and this synagogue would be empty of them. Only the prayer and learning which does not come from the heart can fill an earthly abode." ³¹

Sometimes, it is just a case of Buber's compressing for the sake of a clearer line. Thus Newman renders the story about Rabbi Bunam's decision not to write the book called Adam with which Buber began "What is Man?" thus:

Said Rabbi Bunam: "It was my intention to write a treatise under the title "Man". It was to require merely a quarter of a page, and the whole meaning of the term "man" was to be included therein. But after consideration, I changed my decision, lest my treatise might lead to false commentaries.³²

But sometimes there seems to be "a world of difference":

Newman: Before the Besht became renowned, it chanced that once he lacked money for the Sabbath. At sunrise on Friday, he went to the house of a stranger, knocked on the door, and then took his departure. The man awakened, dressed hurriedly and ran after the Besht. When he approached the Besht and observed his poor raiment, he asked: "If you came to me to obtain aid, why did you go away?" The Besht replied: "When a man is born, his sustenance is born with him. It is merely his imperfections that cause his livelihood to await the persiasion of his efforts before it comes to him. Since each man's imperfections are different in scale, the amount of effort required is also different. I believed that my life, removed from worldliness, entitled me to gain my needs with but little effort; hence I knocked at your door. After I had made this effort, I felt confident that God would aid me, and it makes no difference to me whether help comes through you or through another person.³³

Buber: It happened in the days of the Baal-Shem's youth, that one Friday he had nothing at all in the house to prepare for the Sabbath, not a crumb, not a penny. So early in the morning, he tapped at the window of a well-to-do man, and said: "there is someone who has nothing for the Sabbath," and walked on. The man, who did not know the Baal-Shem, ran after him and asked: "If you need help, why do you run away?" The Baal-Shem laughed and replied: "We know from the Gemara that every man is born with his livelihood. Now, of course, the heavier the load of one's sins, the greater effort one must make to get the appointed livelihood to come. But this morning I felt scarcely any weight on my shoulders. Still there was enough to make me do a little something - and that is what I just did.³⁴

Most characteristic of the difference between Buber's telling now and that of his own earlier efforts is the contrast between "The Revelation" as reported in The Legend of the Baal-Shem and the episode now entitled "The Baal-Shem Reveals himself". Here again we have the story of the rabbi who stops at the inn and is detained against his will to stay for the Sabbath. Again that Sabbath eve is the one on which the Baal-Shem receives the message that the time for concealment is over; but now in place of those strange experiences of whirl and prison and abyss which restrain the rabbi, there is only a broken wheel and other similar everyday obstacles which force him to stay on until Friday comes. There is nothing to arouse the rabbi's wonder at his host; the guest is asked to pronounce the benediction over the wine lest his host "give himself away by the fervor he knew he could not conceal". But in the middle of the night the guest awakens and sees the great white light which shines out from the hearth. Although there is none of the elaboration of this vision, now no word of a bluish light which incessantly changed color nor of the unmoving white light which surrounds the master's head, the effect is the same: the rabbi recognizes whom he has seen.³⁵

What we note in these tales is their austere compression; how often they have been reduced to the simplest interchange:

"What was most important to your teacher?"
 "Whatever he happened to be doing at the
 moment."36

"I have no key to open you."
 "Then pry me open with a nail."37

When Mendel was in Kotzk, the rabbi of that town asked him: "Where did you learn the art of silence?" He was on the verge of answering the question, but then he changed his mind, and practiced his art.38

The concentration of words is at the same time a concentration on words, on the saying which arises from the event:

Rabbi Elimelekh's servant once forgot a spoon for Rabbi Mendel who was a guest at Rabbi Elimeleh's table. Everyone ate except Rabbi Mendel. The zaddik observed this and asked: "Why aren't you eating?" "I have no spoon," said his guest.

"Look," said Rabbi Elimelekh, "one must know enough to ask for a spoon, and a plate too, if need be." Rabbi Mendel took the word of his teacher to heart. From that day on his fortunes were on the mend.39

Once when Rabbi Mordecai was in the great town of Minsk expounding the Torah to a number of men hostile to his way, they laughed at him. "What you say does not explain the verse in the least!" they cried. "Do you really think," he replied, "that I was trying to explain the verse in the book? That doesn't need explanation! I want to explain the verse that is within me."40

Rabbi Moshe of Kobryn said: "When you utter a word before God, then enter into that word with every one of your limbs."

One of his listeners asked: "How can a big human being possibly enter into a little word?"

"Anyone who thinks himself bigger than the word," said the zaddik, "is not the kind of person we are talking about." 41

Often we are reminded of Kafka's parables. Kafka's Abraham "who was prepared to satisfy the demand for a sacrifice immediately, with the promptness of a waiter, but was unable to bring it off because he could not get away, being indispensable" ⁴² seems very like the rabbi of Apt who postpones again and again until too late, always for the best of reasons, his visit to the rabbi of Naskhizh for whom everything, "teaching and prayers, eating and sleeping, is all of one piece." ⁴³ Kafka's "Before the Law" which ends with the door-keeper telling the man: "No one but you could gain admittance through this door, since this door was intended only for you. Now I am going to shut it," ⁴⁴ is like the Hasidic "Story of the Cape", which tells of the woman who brings to the maggid of Kosnitz her longing for a son and who is told how his mother's willing gift of her one fine thing, her good cape, had led to his own birth:

"I, too," cried the mother, "will bring you a good cape of mine so that I may get a son."
 "That won't work," said the maggid. "You heard the story. My mother had no story to go by." ⁴⁵

Mendel's silence suggests Kafka's servant who cannot understand, much less answer, the questions put to him by the stranger in the tavern and so apologetically rises to leave, but is told: "Stay, that was only a test. He who does not answer the questions has passed the test." ⁴⁶ But the relation goes deeper than these parallels in dramatic situation and transcends the difference created by what Buber called Kafka's "fore-ground Paulinism", ⁴⁷ by his experiencing of

that "eclipse of God" which Buber also knows but of which the Hasidim were innocent; it reaches to the inner tempo of the poetry.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

In Tales of the Hasidim, Buber includes an anecdote about one of the Baal-Shem's disciples writing down all the master's teachings. When the Baal-Shem discovered this book he studied it for a long time, page by page, and then said, "In all this there is not a single word I said. You were not listening for the sake of heaven....so your ears heard what I did not say." ⁴⁸

Perhaps this anecdote will serve as a preface to the "chronicle" Buber wrote during the second World War, For the Sake of Heaven. As he writes in its foreword, you make a mistake if you understand what I have to say as presenting a doctrine: "He who expects of me a teaching other than a pointing out of this character will always be disillusioned." ⁴⁹ Throughout the writing of this narrative Buber seems almost to be saying: can't you see, it's always been a pointing out of this character.

What led him to compose such a full-length fictional narrative was his search for the inter-relating form for "an enormous coil of stories of interrelated content" which he had come upon in his work on the Hasidic tales but which demanded a different method, not just the juxtaposition of

anecdote with anecdote nor a theoretically conceived connection. What was called for was a delineation of the outer and inner dramatic patterns, and though these were very fragmentary the filling in could no longer be done with the old freedom but only through obedience to what was demanded by the events and characters themselves.⁵⁰ The theme of the book, he tells us, had already seized Buber during the last year of the first World War but it is only now in the new "atmosphere of telluric crisis" that it comes to ripeness, that is, to form, that it announces its inner completion.⁵¹

Even fictional creation now means to Buber a bodying forth of what confronts him rather than of his own response to it. What he seeks to convey is the shape of dramatic necessity, of form as what Francis Ferguson calls the "moto spirital".⁵² Now it is the incidents and characterization which create the form, the movement of the drama itself. In a sense Martin Buber has now become a writer of prose; there is no longer any room for poetic ornamentation. The form, the action, of this novel is dramatic in Ferguson's sense of being definable by an infinitive, by a verb expressing the purpose. As Chekov's Three Sisters can be summed up: "to get to Moscow" so For the Sake of Heaven can be rendered: "to bring redemption in our time, God willing."

This chronicle is dramatic also in the sense articulated by Buber in his 1925 "fragment" on "Drama and Theatre": "With the mere antagonistic existence of the persons that

proclaims itself dialogically, the dramatic is essentially present; all action can only unfold it." ⁵³ Here the drama lies in the conflict between the Hasidim of Pshysa and of Lublin, between the Yehudi and the Seer, between redemption prepared through the inward turning and the way of magic compulsion. To present "the cruel antitheticalness" of existence which this conflict represented meant penetrating "to the kernel from both sides." ⁵⁴ For the Sake of Heaven "comes off" as drama as Daniel never begins to just because Buber has succeeded in this penetration. In fact, Rivka Schatz-Uffenheimer wonders whether Buber really knows what he has put in the Seer's mouth, whether he is really willing to take it seriously, so authentically Hasidic does it seem to her. Even in the picture of the Yehudi she finds Buber has been true to his sources rather than his inclinations, so that even in Buber's presentation the description of the Yehudi's death marks his return to Hasidism, the joining of Pshysa to Lublin. Despite the necessary exaggerations of a novel, the reader, she finds, has here been brought to the true earth of Hasidic Judaism; the circle of Lublin has been given flesh and blood. She says that a single conversation in For the Sake of Heaven is a living slice of the spiritual world of Hasidism, free from any banality or sentimentality.⁵⁵

This is not just theology in fictional guise, it is event; the characters live for us because they live for Buber as persons, not as self-created aspects of self. True, each represents a point of view, indeed, a theological point

of view, but it is one he lives by - and thus one which gives him life, more perhaps than Naptha or Settembrini of Thomas Mann's Magic Mountain have, who live only by the hope that Hans might live by their ideas. The opposition between the Yehudi and the Seer is not an esthetic contrast but a genuine ethical conflict. The differences between them are not just theoretical but existential. Therefore the confrontation between them must be eventful and not just dialogical. The tone of this novel may be somewhat that of Buber's wife's books which Hans Kohn describes as spun-out narratives (in contrast to Buber's customary anecdotal style) of the eruption of the demonic in human life which often take their inspiration from kabbalistic legend.⁵⁶ Buber dedicated this book to her: "To my wife, Paula Judith."

What is laid before us by this return of Buber to fictional forms is the more general question of how theology may be translated into dramatic literature. Although this has not been the way Buber has himself most often taken, his example here suggests it is a way which must be considered especially in a time which suffers from "the eclipse of God". If in such a time everything depends, as Buber tells us, on man's still being able to say "thou" with all his being to another living and known man,⁵⁷ if man is made man by turning to another as another in order to communicate in a sphere which is common to them but which reaches out beyond the special sphere of either,⁵⁸ then to present this sphere of

"the between" is to present the living action of the word. Here the dialogue about dialogue may become the drama of the word. It is an though the recognition of the word, of the between, of man with man, which had taught Buber the insufficiency of the poetic way, now itself brings about a return to poetic forms, though this poetry is not a composition of images nor of musical tones but a word drama. Buber's novel is set in a time when men can still understand that sphere as God's world; doesn't "everything depend" on drama's still being possible "when the man who has become solitary can no longer say 'Thou' to the 'dead' known God?"⁵⁹ Again there are implications here for an understanding of the theological imagination which Buber himself has not fully followed up, just as we saw him stop short of recognizing man's Thou to God as metaphorical, just as we saw him lay the groundwork for a biblical theology of symbolic forms which he never went on to formulate, just as we noted his failure to recognize the derygmatic imagination at work throughout the New Testament, so again here we see Buber approach a realization that theology calls for a dramatic imagining when he never quite articulates himself and never quite illustrates either.

Buber is very conscious of writing in a time when one contends not concerning the living Word of God but concerning its caricatures, and very aware of all that separates him from the world of the Hasidim almost 150 years earlier pictured here:

I would that I could illustrate by some concrete thing what Pshysha was. I would that I could lift my index finger and point to it, even as on an antique gorgeous raiment one points out the faded pattern. But nothing is left. What is it that Pshysha was? Well, a dwelling place of the spirit. What does that word signify? What can it mean in an age which calls every facile babbler a representative of the spirit and which at bottom seems to have no choice except to see in the life of the spirit either a highly developed means of combat or of amusement?⁶⁰

This novel is not intended as simply a nostalgic return to that other time; it is meant to be a word to our time. The Yiddish novelist, Isaac Bashevis Singer, has written a very different tale about another magician of Lublin. It may be that a comparison of these two novels will help us to better understand Buber's purpose.

Dan Jacobson, in an essay on Singer's work, says that his setting his fiction in the small Jewish communities of nineteenth century Poland has "the effect of something willed into existence, either as memorial or parable." ⁶¹ Though Singer has recreated this east European Jewish life for its own sake, he has sought also to bring it into relation to our world, "to ask repeatedly, incessantly, obsessively, why it should have suffered destruction." ⁶² Jacobson believes that the evil which haunts Singer, the evil that the Nazi holocaust brought into view, is incommensurate with this setting, that Singer is thus forced to import evil "into a world which cannot really contain or express it":

The evil which obsesses him is far greater than anything his poor peddlers, ambitious rabbis, lecherous widows, grasping merchants, or their apostate sons, are capable of committing.....They did not gas children,..... they did not lay waste their towns and villages. He cannot forget that these things were done; at the same time confining himself to so relatively innocent (if only because so utterly powerless) a society, and searching in it for evidence of every kind of human impulse and action, he is compelled into a stridency or insistence that appears out of proportion.....So, too often, the employment of infernal agents in the stories seems part of a private nightmare or fantasy.....rather than.....symbols of what we know or should know about ourselves.⁶³

Surprisingly, this seems less true of For the Sake of Heaven than of The Magician of Lublin which seems at first so much more contemporary. Singer in a recent review described Buber's Daniel as "rootless mysticism", as lacking a God who reveals himself with moral demands on man.⁶⁴ Yet the conflict between good and evil, the questionableness of what God wants from man, seems more real in Buber's novel where the Yehudi's whole point is that Gog is within than in Singer's. The Yehudi tells the Seer:

It does not suffice me to know the truth concerning the evil that is in the world. The evil in the world is mighty; evil has power over the world. And I certainly gain no experience of evil when I meet my fellow-man. For in that case I can grasp it only from without, estrangedly or with hatred and contempt, in which case it really does not enter my vision; or else, I overcome it with my love and in that case I have no vision of it either. I experience it when I meet myself. Within me, where no element of strangeness has divisive force and no love has redeeming force, there do I directly experience that something which would force me to betray God and which seeks to use for that purpose the powers of my own soul.⁶⁵

Yasha is much more "modern" than the Yehudi or the Seer or any of Buber's Hasids, for "they had their God, he had only doubt"; like Singer's other figure, Gimpel the Fool, he has to win back his faith, and at least in the central section of the book he shares our problematic relation to religion in the orthodox sense: "All right son, maybe there is a God and a hell. But how does that help? Does one don a prayer shawl?"⁶⁶ Yet Yasha lives in a much narrower world; his whole concern is with his own salvation; there is no sense of a world redemption which depends on his own.

Buber opens his story with the storyteller's traditional "Time was when....." He then leads us along the main street of Lublin into Rabbi Jacob Yitzchak's house. He uses anecdotes, familiar to us from Tales of the Hasidim, to establish character so that we quickly know the rabbi as a seer and as one concerned with passion, "even indeed with what is called the evil impulse or tendency, seeing that without it there is no manner of fruitfulness, whether of the body or of the spirit."⁶⁷ Almost immediately the telling of stories is dramatized as the rabbi's disciples test the newcomers, Yehudi and his friend, Yeshaya, by demanding that they tell a story from their own experience which has also to do with Lublin. Here with great economy we have the significance of storytelling in this culture presented at the same time that the plot which centers on the opposition between the Yehudi and the party already established in Lublin is set in motion. Through the Yehudi's stories we are also given an intimation

of his character; as the others brag of their rabbi as a miracle worker, the Yehudi says quietly: "The miracle worker is not of such great importance." ⁶⁸ Quickly too we are shown how the shetl atmosphere is pervaded with Torah and Zohar, how the week moves from sabbath to sabbath, the year through all the Jewish festivals. There are interchanges between man and wife which weave the life of everyday into the fabric of the narrative:

Bunam called his wife Rivka to come to their dwelling from the shop. She smiled as she always did, when she looked at him. Her husband seemed always to amuse her anew but also, and in a far greater measure, to delight her. He seemed to have no objection to amusing her, so long as he delighted her too. ⁶⁹

In contrast the Yehudi's wife screams at him:

You pay no attention to anything except the dreams which you carry around in you, and you think I don't know. But I know everything. Nothing but dreams, empty dreams, and you forget that you have a wife and you forget that you have a son and you forget everything and you care about nothing except your dreams and you are careful that nothing should happen to them. But we, and what is going to become of us, that doesn't concern you. ⁷⁰

And always there is David of Lelov who has so much less to say than his two friends, the Yehudi and Bunam. Yet his awareness of what is happening in the immediate situation is so important to all of them. It is he who has a carob bean for the little girl hopping on the cobblestones who collides with his knee. ⁷¹ When the swallow blindly collides with the wall of the rabbi's study in what seems like a

terrifying omen, it is David who holds it in his hands and fills a mug with water for it to drink from when it comes to.⁷² And as the climax of the novel draws near and all are gathered in the Seer's house of study, David sees that the eyes of the rabbi are fixed on the Yehudi:

Thus had a boy once looked whom he had caught in the act of tearing out the brilliant wings of a butterfly. What had he, David, done on that occasion to prevent the wretched deed? He remembered well. He had uttered the shrill cry of a hawk.....and the boy had been startled and the cruel hand had opened and the captive had flown. And on the instant David of Lelov struck his fist upon the Sabbath table, a wine bottle crashed to the floor. The Seer started up.⁷³

The whole first part of the novel is told from the point of view of an external observer; everything takes place as visible action or as dialogue. In Part Two, however, are included excerpts from the records of "Benjamin", a disciple of the school of Lublin who conveys the confusion which the experiences of these years leave with him.

The action centers on Lublin throughout yet in some ways the outside world seems more real here than in The Magician of Lublin, where the action moves back and forth between the town and the cosmopolitan capital, Prague. Here Lublin is made the center of the world of the Napoleonic wars; to the participants it seems as though the outcome of history were being decided in this provincial city. This atmosphere of telluric crisis is created in such a way that it includes our world and our wars as well. The events on

the battlefields are only surface happenings; their meaning is being determined in the Seer's house of study; the reality is not the war but the symbolical, magical, ritual drama enacted by the Hasidim. The Seer and the Yehudi are in conflict about the relation between symbol and reality. The Seer seeks to use his powers to end this eon and bring in another; the Yehudi through hallowing to transform this world. This is again the conflict between the apocalypticist and the prophet, the contrast between the artist who creates a world out of his own soul and the artist who seeks to praise and rescue the things of the earth.

Both Singer's book and Buber's are about a "turning" in a way that The Legend of the Baal-Shem hadn't been at all; there we were still in the realm of the picaresque, of development perhaps but never of the turning. In both of these books the tension is wound more and more tightly. Yasha, whose whole life has been a hazardous dance on a tightrope, now finds himself delaying rehearsals and evading all considerations of how to maintain his "footing" with mistress or with wife. He attempts a theft and he, the tumbler, falls and injures his leg; his mistress tells him: "You must have some sort of covenant with God since he punished you directly on the spot." 74 Yasha knows that he is

undergoing some sort of transformation, that he would never again be the Yasha he had been. The last twenty-four hours were unlike any previous day he had experienced. They summed up all his previous existence, and in summing it up had put a seal upon it. He had seen the hand of God. He had reached the end of the road. 75

So Yasha goes home and has himself bricked into a cell without a door like an ascetic Lithuanian saint as he had once teasingly threatened his wife he might do.

As the tension deepens in Buber's book we recall the end of I and Thou:

In each new aeon fate becomes more oppressive, turning more shattering. And the theophany becomes ever nearer, increasingly near to the sphere that lies between beings, to the Kingdom that is hidden in our midst, there between us. History is a mysterious approach. Every spiral of its way leads us both into profounder perversion and more fundamental turning. But the event that from the side of the world is called turning is called from God's side redemption.⁷⁶

Turning, the Biblical tsuvah, the redirection of man's heart to God, is for Buber the central event in human life. The world was created for the sake of man's beginning, for the sake of such reversal. This is why in For the Sake of Heaven the action must build up to a climax. As this novel moves toward the turning it focuses more and more on the conflict between the Seer's and the Yehudi's understandings of how the turning, the turning of the world to God, is to be brought about. They agree that it will come as a light after darkness. For the Seer this means a rejoicing in Napoleon's victories as perhaps the beginning of the wars of Gog and Magog. For the Yehudi it means trust even when we believe ourselves lost. Both agree that the beginning must come from man. The Seer believes this means "we must strive to heighten earth's conflict."⁷⁷ The Yehudi and his friends

reply: "Truly it does depend on us; not on our power but on our repentance; not until man despairs of himself and turns to God with the entire force of that despair will help be given him." 78 The climax comes through the confrontation between these two which neither really sought. Despite their fundamental opposition each respected and loved the other, so that the conflict came to a head only because it was blown up by the Rabbi's jealous disciples. The Yehudi cries in fear: "How can you know what you're doing by fanning this evil?" and is told: "It is too late in time to think of the individual soul." 79

The central moment comes in connection with a celebration of the Seder during which each of the participants was to fix his entire soul upon the coming of redemption during each part of the ceremony and to do so according to very special attitudes and aims as directed by the Seer. The Yehudi and his friends agreed to participate since the goal was that which "from the beginning was the aim of their common and passionate desire: the coming of redemption, come as it may." 80 But all is lost because everywhere disturbances took place, in Kalev the rabbi recited the Haggadah in Hungarian, in Tschernobil the Afikoman was not to be found; everywhere disturbances took place, but especially in the Yehudi's home in Pshysha. The Seer's attempt has failed. "It was on the day after that Pesach night that Napoleon Bonaparte set forth from Paris upon that decisive campaign

which put an end to his dominion." 81 The cause of failure is seemingly completely accidental: the celebration in Pshysha had been delayed by a squabble between the Yehudi's wife and his mother.

So there is failure and then, shortly after, death for both the Yehudi and the Rabbi. The Yehudi willingly dies to bring the Seer a message from heaven because, as he tells Benjamin: "If one is permitted to bring a message from the world of truth, it is bound to be a message of truth." 82 The Rabbi suddenly cries out in a strong voice the night before he dies: "'For My plans are not your plans, neither are your ways My ways, is the saying of the Lord.'" 83 As the Maggid had said: "Everything points to the coming of redemption, but otherwise than we are inclined to think." 84

At the end of For the Sake of Heaven the Yehudi and the Seer have each in a sense converted the other. But they are both dead; the Messiah has not come; the way of magic coercion has failed. Now, and this is clearly our now, we are on another spiral of the way; in our eon fate has become still more oppressive, the turning would be even more shattering. "We await a theophany...." Helmut Kuhn, for whom For the Sake of Heaven assures Buber an enduring place in German literature, must sense this inclusion of our waiting when he says, "from first page to last, it conveys the stance of faithful expectation." 85 Karl Kerényi says that he values this work above everything else Buber has written,

that he sees it as the spoken, word-ed fulfillment of all that Buber has most wanted to share, comparable only to the blazing hymns of Hölderlin: "One lingers here in the 'origin-al' situation of religion." 86

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

In 1955 Buber wrote a mystery play, Elijah, which like the Tales shows how now for Buber all is concentrated in order to allow meaning to arise as word. The whole of Elijah's prophetic career is compressed into twenty-three short scenes, twenty-three dialogical encounters. The play opens with Elijah's call to prophesy:

THE VOICE: Elijah!
 ELIJAH: No! No! No!
 THE VOICE: Elijah!
 ELIJAH: No!
 (Silence)
 THE VOICE: Elijah! Go!
 ELIJAH: I resist you. You cannot compel me.
 THE VOICE: I cannot compel you.
 (Silence)
 ELIJAH: Cruel driver, leave off!
 My Lord, where shall I go?.....
 What shall I say? 87

It ends when Elijah has spoken all that has been given to him to say: "There is nothing that it is given to me to say, now..... There is no more message." 88 The compression, the elimination of all narrative connections, renews the story's idiomatic and dramatic force without making it falsely modern. In the first encounter between Elijah and Ahab when Elijah

demands that the House of Baal be demolished, Ahab responds: "Really, it will not do. Baal is Jezebel's God." ⁸⁹ When Elijah asks the people at Mt. Carmel, "How long will you try to hop on two twigs at once, like the bird that trips over the fork in the bough?" ⁹⁰ the metaphor has been refreshed. When Elijah challenges the prophets of Baal we see enacted before us the difference between the God of dream and the God of word. Elijah says, "The dream is Baal's dwelling place. Baal is nowhere to be found other than in dream. There one receives what one wants to have; nowhere else does one receive it." ⁹¹ Baal's Spokesman mocks Elijah:

Baal the Mighty does not hold speech with his servants, as you report of your God. Through all kinds of contact he communicates to us both his will and his mercy. We call to him, of course, just after our human fashion, but he answers us without sound. Your prophets of Israel imagine you can speak with gods as if they were men. ⁹²

To which Elijah responds: "Then call to the Baal in your fashion. The hour has come." ⁹³ And then each implores his God for rain after his own fashion. At the end of the play Elijah and Elisha stand on the Jordan and Elijah turns over the prophetic task to Elisha as Buber understands that the Old Testament prophets have turned it over to us:

ELISHA: How shall I remain without you, my father!

ELIJAH: No one except him who bears loneliness ripens to a prophet. For you too, not merely for me, it is fitting now to be alone.

ELISHA: Then give me your blessing.

ELIJAH: I bless you that you withstand the Lord.

ELISHA: Do you not bestow upon me the power of your spirit?

ELIJAH: The spirit has never been within me. It has come and gone.

ELISHA: How shall I fulfill the heavy task that is laid on me?

ELIJAH: You do not, indeed, have to begin from the beginning as I did. I leave to you what belongs to me. It was not spirit but obedience to spirit.⁹⁴

Here Buber has at least once turned directly to that form of writing to which his understanding of theology, of the prophetic word, seems to direct us.

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For the Sake of Heaven ends with the Seer's recognition of the mystery of God's way. This recognition does not, however, lead the Seer to a loss of faith in God. As Emil Fackenheim points out in his essay, "On the Eclipse of God", Biblical faith is not destroyed by tragedy but only tested by it; "in the test it both clarifies its own meaning and conquers tragedy." When the Psalmist complains that God has "hidden his face" he does not doubt God's existence or his love; what he says is that "unaccountably, God has hidden His face; that He has hidden it only for a while; and that He will turn His face back to man again."⁹⁵ But in our

time the hiddenness of God is experienced differently:

The extremity of faith in the modern age is uncertainty as to whether what is experienced is an eclipse of God, or the final exposure of an illusion.⁹⁶

During the last fifteen years Buber has turned again and again to this problem of faith which he believes to be deeply intertwined with a failure of the imagination. His recognition of the difference between our age and earlier times is not new. In his 1929 essay "Dialogue" in the very paragraph which speaks of our expectation of a theophany he writes:

This difference of faith is by no means to be understood merely as a subjective one. It is not based on the fact that we who live today are weak in faith, and it will remain even if our faith is ever so much strengthened. The situation of the world itself, in the most serious sense, more precisely the relation between man and God has changed.⁹⁷

In 1951 he has this to say:

Eclipse of God - such indeed is the character of the historic hour through which the world is passing. But it is not a process which can be adequately accounted for by instancing the changes that have taken place in man's spirit. An eclipse of the sun is something that occurs between the sun and our eyes, not in the sun itself But, when as in this instance, something is taking place between heaven and earth, one misses everything when one insists on discovering within earthly thought the power that unveils the mystery.⁹⁸

In 1961:

In these last years, in a most difficult searching and questioning time in which the terror of the Now is ever again renewed, I

have not come further than that I no longer know a revelation through the hiddenness of the face, no longer a speaking through the silence. The eclipse of God is to be seen with the eyes; it demands to be recognized. The one who today knows nothing to say but - "See, there, it shines" - he leads into error.⁹⁹

Fackenheim, too, warns of the too easy word of hope:

Under these circumstances, it is natural that there should be those who wish to be told whether the present crisis of religious faith will lead to a renewal. But anyone who asks for a prediction does not understand what has been said.¹⁰⁰

Buber's Eclipse of God is a collection of addresses spoken in response to the experiencing of God's silent concealment. Although this book appeared more than a decade ago, it seems in many ways to present a more deeply comprehending response to Nietzsche's proclamation of the death of God than does the work of today's "radical theologians". For Buber speaks of the "eclipse" rather than of the "death" of God and seeks to show how this eclipse is related to a decline in the image-making power of the human heart. This decline prevents man from catching a "glimpse of the appearance of the Absolute" and thus allows false absolutes to "rule over the soul which is no longer able to put them to flight through the image of the true." ¹⁰¹ Nietzsche, he believes, "could bear his proclamation only as a turning-point, not as an end-point; time and again he seeks a conception that will show a way out that might save God for those who had become godless." ¹⁰² Buber's book is mostly a

consideration of some of the most important "attempts to fill the horizon that has been declared empty." 103 As a prelude Buber places the 1932 "Report on Two Talks", the account of the talk in which Buber discovers to his dismay that he has led the challenging worker to the God of the philosophers, not to Him to whom one can say "Thou", and of the other talk in which he defends his inability to abandon the word "God": "We cannot cleanse the word 'God' and we cannot make it whole; but defiled and mutilated as it is, we can raise it from the ground and set it over an hour of great care." 104

In trying to show what has brought us to this condition which works on us like the silence of God, Buber begins by speaking of times when God is replaced by the images men "have" of him, when religion therefore becomes nothing "but an intrapsychic process whose products are 'projected' on a plane in itself fictitious but vested with reality by the soul." 105 In such times it is easy to conclude that "every alleged colloquy with the divine was only a soliloquy, or rather a conversation between various strata of the self," 106 and then to go on to announce that God is "dead". What this announcement really means, says Buber, is that man's capacity to experience a reality absolutely independent of himself, to say "Thou", is lamed and that his capacity to apprehend the divine in images is lamed in the same measure. 107 The traditional images are "no longer witness and symbol of a transcendent presence, but rather only something in the nature of imagination or play." 108 But faith does not mean "holding

fast to an image that one has made of God, nor even holding fast to the faith in God that one has conceived." 109 Buber thus recognizes the death of images of God and the decline of man's image-making power but he believes it is wrong to interpret this as the death of God or to use it as a warrant for demythologizing. "For the great images of God fashioned by mankind are born not of imagination but of real encounters with real divine power and glory." 110 Here the theological imagination and the primary word "I-Thou" are deeply intertwined; true images arise as response.

Buber then turns to consider how Sartre and Jung and Heidegger have responded to Nietzsche's proclamation. He suggests that Sartre's interpretation, "He spoke to us and now is silent", implies far more than Sartre himself would want to admit, something which is to be endured in hope rather than reduced to "sensational and incompetent sayings" about the death of God. Buber asks whether existence is really so self-enclosed as Sartre seems to believe or whether it does not essentially mean standing over against the other. He wonders whether the primary relation between myself and another is really a reciprocal subject-object one or whether it is not rather a mutually confirming "I-Thou" relation. Yet, we might ask, is not Sartre's picture of man without God precisely a description of the world created by the "I-it" attitude; has not Sartre conveyed to us as powerfully as anyone the hell that existence is when the other can only become my object or I his?

Sartre seems to have presented dramatically that duality of being and seeming which Buber discusses in "Elements of the Interhuman". Garcin is the perfect embodiment of the type of human existence which proceeds "from what one wishes to seem", of the man who "makes his life subservient to the images which he produces in others."¹¹¹ For Buber thus to yield to seeming is man's essential cowardice, though he believes that it is possible to exorcise such ghosts, to drive out such semblances, to stir our will to be confirmed as what we really are and to perceive our fellow man as a whole and as unique.¹¹² Such interhuman confirmation which lets no seeming, no false images, creep in between the one and the other is for Buber still a kind of imagining. He speaks of our need to develop in ourselves a perception of the other which is not the looking-out of Sartre's description but "a bold swinging" into the life of the particular real person who confronts us, whom we attempt to make present to ourselves just in this way and not otherwise. Such a seeing Buber speaks of not as intuition but as "imagining the real."¹¹³

Buber's central criticism of Sartre, however, is that just as one cannot accept an image one has created but only one born out of a real encounter so one cannot believe in a meaning or value one has invented rather than discovered. Sartre's call for self-determined values seems to him an empty gesture.¹¹⁴ Living images, direction-giving values, must, Buber believes, issue as response not out of man's subjectivity.

Buber's critique of Jung is marred by his failure to take seriously Jung's phenomenological epoché which leads him to read Jung as asserting that religion is nothing but a relation to psychic events and God nothing but an autonomous psychic content. Jung's psychology of religion, he says, is to be understood as the announcement of the image of the divine man, the Gnostic Self, as the coming God.¹¹⁵

When Buber looked at Heidegger earlier in "What is Man?" he focused on that philosopher's belief that "the true significance and depth and import" of man's life "is disclosed only in the realm of the individual's relation to himself." Buber wrote of the impression Heidegger's philosophy left with him:

We enter a strange room of the spirit, but we feel as if the ground we tread is the board on which a game is being played whose rules we learn as we advance, deep rules which we ponder, but which arose and persist only through a decision having once been reached to play this intellectual game and to play it this way. And at the same time, it is true, we feel that this game is not arbitrarily chosen by the player, but he is under necessity, it is his fate.¹¹⁶

He described then how Heidegger's philosophy arises out of that history which culminates in Nietzsche's saying and which apparently leaves nothing "to the solitary man but to seek intimate communication with himself." ¹¹⁷ "Heidegger's man stands before himself and nothing else, and since in the last resort one cannot stand before oneself - he stands in his anxiety and dread before nothing." ¹¹⁸ It was this

monological conception of existence which had led Buber to say:

When the man who has become solitary can no longer say "Thou" to the "dead" known God, everything depends on whether he can still say it to the living unknown God by saying "thou" with all his being to another living and known man.¹¹⁹

But that was the Heidegger of Sein und Zeit; many have believed they discerned a deep affinity between Buber and the "later Heidegger". Walter Kaufmann, for example, says there are sentences in I and Thou which Heidegger might have written thirty years later.¹²⁰ Jean Wahl speaks especially of Holzwege and of the importance Hölderlin has for both.¹²¹ In Eclipse of God it seems important then that the Heidegger to whom Buber now turns is the interpreter of Hölderlin. In the first address he says that Heidegger "rightfully looks upon this hour as an hour of night" and that he seems to promise that "after the imageless era a new procession of images may begin." He shows how this insight is related to Hölderlin's verse:

Aber weh! es wandelt in Nacht, es wohnt,
 wie im Orkus,
 Ohne Goettliches unser Geschlecht.

Buber believes, however, that Heidegger, unlike Hölderlin, is speaking of a rebirth of images which would proceed from the self and not from real encounters and so of images which would be but illusion and self-deception.¹²² In a subsequent paper, Buber considers the essay on "Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry" in which Heidegger speaks of our time as

standing under a double Not: "the No-more of the gods that have fled and the Not-yet of the god that is coming." ¹²³ Again Buber fears that Heidegger asks too much from man with regard to this new coming, because Being "for him is bound to and attains its illumination through the destiny and history of man." He makes the reappearance so dependent on man, and on the conceptual clarification of fundamental words such as "God" or "the Holy", that the god that is coming seems to become the conjured god of thought. ¹²⁴

Yet we may ask whether when Heidegger speaks of the human word as the listening word, of the word of Being as a call which demands our answer and makes us into speakers, of man's words as bringing into human sentences what is already on the way toward being spoken, ¹²⁵ we are not very close to Buber's understanding. The central difference seems to be that Heidegger's is a philosophy of word and Buber's a theology of word, that whereas Heidegger begins with Logos as an ordering, an assemblage, which words make apparent to us, ¹²⁶ Buber begins with the Biblical Dabar, the word that is spoken, that takes place between man in a particular time and place. For Heidegger the world is cosmos, for Buber creation. Where Heidegger can say, Language speaks not man, Buber for whom language means address and response must say, man speaks within the world of word. Word demands answer and not just clarification. In At the Turning (a collection of addresses on Judaism given during the same visit to America as were the addresses included in Eclipse of God),

Buber wants to make us recognize the unparalleled concreteness of the Bible's conception of God's word to man: transcendence speaks to us in the language of events and situations; we answer through the language of our actions and attitudes, our reactions and abstentions.¹²⁷ Buber believes that it is only when we understand man's word as response in this sense that we are fully responsible to the word given to us. He protests, for example, that in his essay on the origin of the work of art, Heidegger's interpretation of a saying of Dürer's attacks "language and its spoken-ness with all too rough, all too intention-laden a hand.....Dürer's simple profundity is swallowed up by this wholly different profundity of word-associative combinations and complications." ¹²⁸

Yet even Buber recognizes that sometimes he and Heidegger come remarkably close. He praises Heidegger's interpretation of that verse of Hölderlin's with which he closed his own essay, "What is Common to All":

Since we have been a conversation
And have been able to hear from one another

This is Heidegger's explanation which Buber finds himself ready to echo:

The gods can only enter the Word if they themselves address us and place their demand upon us. The Word that names the gods is always an answer to this demand.¹²⁹

Buber has sought all through Eclipse of God to show how the death of God is the inevitable outcome of the history

of western philosophy. Heidegger points to that same history as a "forgetfulness of Being". Philosophy, Buber says, begins with the becoming independent of reflection and leads toward "the intellectual letting go of God"; the other which confronts man changes from "an object of imagination, wishes, and feelings to one that is conceptually comprehensible, to an object of thought." 130 Philosophy begins with looking away and the concrete from which it starts cannot be reached again through philosophical abstraction; "it is irrecoverable." 131 The metaphor of the eclipse of God suggests that "something can step between our existence and His as between the earth and the sun." 132 This something, Buber suggests, is the world of abstractions, the world created by looking away, the world of "I-it" "gigantically swollen", and the "I" of this relation which is unable to say "Thou". This world and this I "step in between and shut off from us the light of heaven." 133

The young American theologians who have recently taken up Nietzsche's proclamation recognize like Buber that to say that God is dead is something more "than a rather romantic way of pointing to the traditional difficulty of speaking about the holy God in human terms." 134 When Thomas Altizer speaks of God's death as an historical event which has happened in our time he wants to say that it is something which has happened to us and not simply in us. He agrees with Buber that it is the idea of God, the God of metaphysics and of traditional Christian theology, that has

gotten between us and the biblical God, "the God of the End" who refused to be identified with the values and structures, the order of meaning, of the world.¹³⁵ Therefore, Altizer believes, the theologian must help bring an end to this idea, must live the death of God and so learn anew that faith is not a flight from the actualities of human existence.¹³⁶ He notes, almost in passing, that "we have lost the intimacy with God that alone makes possible the use of a personal pronoun in referring to deity,"¹³⁷ but he fails to connect this with the replacement of the biblical God by the philosopher's rational concepts. Therefore for Altizer the question which the so-called death of God raises is not whether we can still address another man as Thou, but rather whether we can recognize in the meaningless void itself the hither side of God. "The death of God," he says, "has been followed by the resurrection of the Nothing."¹³⁸

Although William Hamilton speaks of the death of God where Buber would speak of the eclipse of God, Hamilton, too, seems really to mean that something has gotten between man and God:

It is not just that a capacity has dried up within us; we do not take all this as merely a statement about our frail psyches.....We are not talking about the absence of the experience of God, but about the experience of the absence of God.¹³⁹

We might assume that one who finds D. H. Lawrence's rejection of the world of technology and power and protestation against the mechanization of life so "archaic and piquant",¹⁴⁰ would

dispute Buber's identification of that which has stepped between with the world of "I-It". Hamilton, however, ends by saying that it is the God who serves as a fulfiller of needs or a solver of problems, the God who is a necessary being, either psychologically or metaphysically, that has died and that to acknowledge this death may make it possible for us to come to see that God is to be enjoyed and delighted in: "Part of the meaning of waiting for God is to be found in this attempt to understand what delighting in Him might mean." ¹⁴¹ So Hamilton speaks of our time as one for waiting, hoping; he speaks of this time of waiting as a time of attending to the concrete and personal. In thus pointing to delighting rather than using, and calling for a turning from the general to the unique and personal, ¹⁴² Hamilton seems to just miss seeing the relationships Buber uncovers between the turning to the concrete, saying "Thou", and the renewal of the imagination. Could he not echo the words with which Buber ends: "The eclipse of the light of God is no extinction; even tomorrow that which has stepped in between may give way." ¹⁴³

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It is time now to draw this all together and to consider what Buber himself understands himself to have been doing and how much help his way can be to us in our search for our way of bringing God's word to word. In his most recent writings, which have tended to be short addresses and essays, Buber has addressed himself to the

question of the theological imagination. He has turned to ask again the question about language, to wonder again about the mystery that the coming-to-be of language and of man are one, to make explicit that the call to authentic be-ing is a call to authentic word-ing.

This reflective movement is perhaps most obvious in his response to the critiques included in the volume edited by Paul Schillp and Maurice Friedman where he speaks of himself as a philosopher because he has sought to transform his unique experience into a universal which might point us to the equivalent event in our own lives. Yet the focus falls on the two unique events, the one in his life and the one in yours; the concept serves as a bridge. We have seen that sometimes, as in For the Sake of Heaven and the Hasidic tales and less directly in the Biblical commentaries, even the bridge has had the concrete, unique form which characterizes the universal of art. In Eclipse of God he spoke of our dependence on philosophy for an "objectifying elaboration of the situation", but now we must also take into account the peculiar significance of artistic modes of communication "from which a communicated content cannot be detached and given independent existence."¹⁴⁴ What has come to seem most important to Buber is not bringing things to word as in Rilke's elegy but coming to an understanding over situations.¹⁴⁵ He hopes to bring to word that word-sphere in which we both stand. Speech, "in its ontological sense", says Buber

was at all times present wherever men regarded one another in the mutuality of I and Thou; wherever one showed the other something in the world in such a way that from then on he really began to perceive it; wherever one gave another a sign in such a way that he could recognize the designated situation as he had not been able to before; wherever one communicated to the other his experience in such a way that it penetrated the other's circle of experience and supplemented it as from within.¹⁴⁶

Buber calls us to reflect on a past hour of our own thinking according to its events rather than its outcome, so that we will recognize how what he wants to bring to word without making into an object, what he seeks to bring into the common world, is itself already "striving toward language."¹⁴⁷ Buber knows that it is absolutely essential that dialogue have a content but he insists it must be the concrete, unique content that is actually happening between the two participants.¹⁴⁸ In his insistence that the word be a spoken word, he address and not simply proposition, that it mean the other and the situation which we share, Buber comes very close to what Bonhoeffer means by "truth" in his essay, "What is Meant by Telling the Truth?"¹⁴⁹ One must seriously realize that the word has its place in the "between":

The importance of the spoken word, I think, is grounded in the fact that it does not want to remain with the speaker. It reaches out toward a hearer, it lays hold of him, it even makes a hearer into a speaker, if perhaps only a soundless one. But this must not be understood as if the place of the occurrence of language is the sum of the two partners in dialogue.....The word that is spoken is found rather in the oscillating sphere between the persons, the sphere that I call the "between".¹⁵⁰

There are echoes here of Franz Rosenzweig's "new thinking" in which the method of speech replaces the earlier philosophic method of thinking. According to Rosenzweig:

Philosophy has always inquired into the "essence" of things. This is the concern that marks it off from the unphilosophical thinking of sound common sense, which never bothers to ask what a thing "actually" is. Common sense is content to know that a chair is a chair, and is unconcerned with the possibility that it may, actually, be something quite different. It is just this possibility that philosophy pursues in its inquiry into the essence of things. Philosophy refuses to accept the world as world, God as God, man as man. All these must "actually" be quite different from what they seem.¹⁵¹

Philosophical thinking is thus driven "into a labyrinth through the alienating power of the little word 'is' which replaces one thing by another."¹⁵² The "new thinking", on the other hand, does not leave behind the little word "and"; it speaks of God and the world and man.¹⁵³ It recognizes, as the thinking of common sense also does, the dependence of cognition on time:

At every moment, cognition is bound to that very moment and cannot make its past not passed, or its future not coming. This holds for everyday matters, and everyone grants it(It) is equally true of great, ultimate matters that we think we behold only as something timeless. What God has done, what he does, what he will do; what has happened to the world and what will happen to it; what has happened to man and what he will do — all this cannot be disengaged from its connection with time.....The tenses of reality cannot be interchanged.¹⁵⁴

Thus like speech the new thinking is bound to time and neither can nor wants to abandon it. Like speech,

it does not know in advance just where it will end. It takes its cues from others. In fact it lives by virtue of another's life, whether that other is the one who listens to a story, answers in the course of a dialogue, or joins in a chorus; while thinking is always a solitary business.¹⁵⁵

As Buber recognizes, there were intimations of this "new" thinking in the philosophers who laid the foundations of western thought, in Heraclitus and in Plato:

It is to this that the seventh Platonic epistle points when it hints at the existence of a teaching which attains to effective reality not otherwise than in manifold togetherness and living with one another, as a light that is kindled from leaping fire.¹⁵⁶

The listener has his role which is like that of the guardians of art but goes beyond it, for conversation depends on his otherness, on his "surprising" role;¹⁵⁷ in talking together as in working together there are agonistic elements, battle and strife:

But in so far as it lets itself be determined by the logos it is a common battle and produces the common: out of the extremist tension, when it takes place in the service of the logos, arises ever anew the harmony of the lyre.¹⁵⁸

Language is "by its nature a system of possible tensions"; it ceases to be living language, becomes fixed and frozen, when it no longer means something personal to the two trying to communicate by way of it. Though their understanding of the concept under discussion may be very close, for each it will have a different "aura", different

personal connotations, unless they "join in betraying the logos for logical analysis";¹⁵⁹ it is the ambiguity of the word that constitutes living language and makes conversation fruitful. Like Gerhard Ebeling, Buber thus recognizes that word is occurrence, is "an event which - like love - involves at least two." Communication, participation, not assertion or information, is language's basic structure.¹⁶⁰ Any conversation, then, calls for that same pushing of language to its limits which the translator is engaged in. Buber aims at a speaking which would work through the ambiguities rather than at a language purified of them; more and more, most clearly in the essay, "The Word that is Spoken", he envisions a speaking which would embrace the philosophical and the poetic.¹⁶¹

He sees that it is the communal nature of the logos which makes man;¹⁶² that it is language which creates community, gives us a world in common. In his reflection on the Heraclitean saying, "The waking have a single cosmos in common", Buber interprets Heraclitus as pointing us to the commonality which follows from our thinking in accordance with the logos and warning us away from any individualism which speaks of a higher existence to be attained through abandoning the communal.¹⁶³ The Heraclitean concept of logos represents the "wedding between meaning and speech"; each soul has its logos "deep in itself, but the logos does not attain to its fullness in us but rather between us; for it means the eternal chance for speech to become true between

men." ¹⁶⁴ Buber ends his interpretive essay with the verse from Hölderlin, "Since we have been a conversation and have been able to hear from one another," which, he says, transmutes the self-contained communality of Heraclitus into a "choral antiphony" directed upwards. ¹⁶⁵

Buber turns directly to the question of the relation between religious and poetic and philosophical communication. In the essay, "Man and His Image Work", he shows that human creating is a bringing-forth not from nothing but from the creation itself, that we can understand art only when we take into account man's own createdness, and his dependence on otherness, on what has being without him; art results not from within man but from what happens to him in the sphere of encounter with the world. ¹⁶⁶ Earth awaits man to become world, a world; she needs him to make visible not what appears but what is. The artist, rather than objectifying the over-against, forms it into an image; he does not copy a pattern which is already there but discovers it through his patterning. ¹⁶⁷

In "The Word that is Spoken", Buber speaks of the truth of poetry as inseparable from its form:

Every authentic poem is also true, but its truth stands outside all relation to an expressible What. We call poetry the not very frequently appearing form of words that imparts to us a truth which cannot come to words in any other manner than this one, in the manner of this form. Therefore, every paraphrase of a poem robs it of its truth. ¹⁶⁸

The interpreter must seek to make us see this form, not try to give us a conceptual substitute for it:

Also bound up with these facts is the problematic of the interpretation of poetry in so far as it seeks anything further than that the word compound be more adequately perceived. The conceptuality that sets as its goal bring a knowable What to clarity and value, detracts from the genuine understanding of the poem and misses the truth borne by it.¹⁶⁹

But Buber recognizes that man needs the conceptual pointers, "needs the bridge". To take seriously that speech is response to the claim of the other is to give attention to this need. Therefore Buber turns to the question of the truth of a more conceptual, a paraphraseable, less to this-speaker-bound way of speaking. How are the two truths, the conceptual and the poetic, related? The understanding of truth to which Buber turns here is not aletheia, "the sublime 'unconcealment' suitable to Being itself" but the Hebrew emuna, 'faithfulness'." Conceptual speaking is "true" speech when it is faithful to the reality once perceived and now expressed, to the speaker and to the one addressed; when it is a word one is responsible for.¹⁷⁰ We recall how important the faithfulness of his "translation" has always been to Buber and how, ever since originality no longer meant novelty, faithfulness and originality, the present working of the origin, have seemed to belong to one another.

In Buber's work the question about the relation between conceptual and imaginative responses to the over-

against is returned to again and again. This question is "represented" by the question: "What kind of speaking is I and Thou?" Buber seems to be saying that if speech arises from the encounter and is directed toward the other then whether it is outwardly "conceptual" or "poetic" does not matter, that even theo-logos may be theo-poeisis.

The essays of these last years arise out of the recognition of God's eclipse which for Buber is an event within the world of words; it is a silence and a no-longer-hearing. In these essays he has turned again to the twofold nature of man's primary words. It becomes clear that Buber's search for a theologizing, a speaking, which will not remain between the walls growing layer by layer like decaying leaves is a search for an imaginative theology; he hopes for a rebirth of the theological imagination. Buber knows that demythologizing is not a cure for the death of the traditional images of God but a symptom of the death of the imagination. The early recognition that somehow man's image-making is central is only now fully understood:

Like one who for many years lived with a wife and shared a common life with her, and all of a sudden it strikes him: "that is a wife," and he smiles. But only now does it begin to dawn on him what that is: a wife.

The early stories themselves seem outgrown like one's own adolescence, like books one loved but has no wish to return to, but they are part of this discovery, that is its sign, "an image out of a place and a moment." The meeting with

the young man taught Buber that the renewing image is not born of the self's experiencing of itself but of an encounter with that which lies before one which involves one's whole being. It springs from a meeting with that which asks to be formed, brought to word, shared with another. Buber has learned, from his reflection on his own Begabung and from the image-makers of the Bible, that images are not added on to experience but that the imagination participates in the original perception and in the preserving memory. Because man is given a word to answer and not simply to repeat, faithful responses must be imaginative and creative. The theological imagination seeks not to clothe but to body forth events, to express their eventfulness, their speakingness. It is a verbal imagination, a celebration of logos, the primal wedding between meaning and speech, a theological imagination. Here words, and not just visual images as in Jung's fantasy thinking, participate in a playful pointing to the divine. Buber's care for words, for their sensuous, gesturing play, expresses his care for the living word. In I and Thou he plays with words, with the primary words, and presents them dancing. His mature retelling of the Hasidic tales seeks to show words bursting forth from event. Second Isaiah knew himself as a sharpened arrow concealed in the quiver; Buber leads us to ask whether God's hiddenness will become a speaking again only when the poet is drawn from the quiver. We think again of Friedrich Schlegel's words:

Everything that can be done so long as theology exists apart from poetry has already been done. Therefore it is time that they should now come together.¹⁷¹

How do we learn from another's theology, and what is it we learn?

Buber leads us beyond his own speaking in the direction of our own. His theology is, indeed, Hinweise, intimations of a way. Buber brings us to realize that theology must now become a theology not of images or concepts but of metaphors, of living word, but his unwillingness to understand Thou as a metaphor suggests, as does also his stopping short of the conclusions which seem implicit in his Biblical hermeneutics, that as long as metaphor is understood as mere metaphor theology and poetry have not yet come together. From following Buber's theological way one comes to an understanding of what following must mean:

Rabbi Noah's disciples noticed that there were a number of ways in which he conducted himself differently from his father, and asked him about this. "I do just as my father did," he replied. "He did not imitate and I do not imitate." ¹⁷²

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This first section of the Bibliography presents those of Buber's writings consulted in the preparation of this dissertation in the order of their original appearance. Since so many of Buber's books are composed of essays written over a period of time, an attempt has been made to indicate the original publication data for each essay. Where an English version is available the reader is directed to it. For a more complete listing of articles, reviews, and poems written before 1930 and never included in any of Buber's books consult "Bibliographie II: Abhandlungen und (Einzelne) Beiträge" in Hans Kohn's Martin Buber: Sein Werk und Seine Zeit, p. 385-394. The bibliographical references appended by Robert Weltsch to his 1961 "Nachwort" to this volume are much less complete. This is also true of the bibliography included by Maurice Friedman in his Martin Buber: The Life of Dialogue and of the bibliography prepared for the Library of Living Philosophers volume on Buber. The three volumed Werke published in 1962-1964 includes only a selection of Buber's most important writings. There is a bibliography of Buber's works (1895-1957) compiled by Moshe Catanne and published in Hebrew by Mosad Billiak Verlag, Jerusalem, 1961, which lists over 900 items.

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46. "Biblischer Humanismus", Der Morgen, Vol. IX, 4 (Oct. 1933); also included in Werke, Vol. II, p. 1085-1093.
47. "Symbolic and Sacramental Existence" in Origin and Meaning of Hasidism, p. 151-181. This is a translation by Maurice Friedman of a lecture given at the 1934 Eranos Conference in Ascona, Switzerland.
48. "Education and World View" in Pointing the Way, p. 98-105. This address was first published in Der Morgen, Vol. X, 11 (1935).
49. "Vorbemerkung" to Hermann Cohen, Die Nächste, Schocken Verlag, Berlin, 1935.
50. "Letters to Franz Rosenzweig on the Law" in Franz Rosenzweig, On Jewish Education, Noonday Press, New York, 1954. These letters were first published in Almanach der Schocken Verlags (1936/37), Berlin.

51. (With Franz Rosenzweig.) Die Schrift und ihrer Verdeutschung, Schocken Verlag, Berlin, 1936. This collection of essays and addresses written in defense of their translation of the Bible during 1926-1935 also includes some responses to criticisms. Buber's introductory essay, "The Man of Today and the Jewish Bible", can be found somewhat shortened in an English translation by Olga Marx in Israel and the World, p. 89-102.
52. "The Question to the Single One" in Between Man and Man, p. 40-82. The translation by Ronald Gregor Smith is based on the German original published by Schocken Verlag, Berlin, 1936.
53. Die Stunde und Die Erkenntnis: Reden und Aufsätze 1933-35, Schocken Verlag, Berlin, 1936. Some of these essays as translated by Olga Marx are included in Israel and the World: "In the Midst of History", p. 78-82; "Teaching and Deed", p. 137-145; "The Jew in the World", p. 167-172; and "The Power of the Spirit", p. 173-182.
54. "The Demand of the Spirit and Historical Reality" in Pointing the Way, p. 177-191. This is Maurice Friedman's translation of Buber's inaugural lecture at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1938. The address was first published in Der Morgen, Vol. XIV, 4 (July 1938), printed by Schocken Verlag in a limited German edition during the same year, and included in Ha-Ruah v'ha-Metzuit. A portion, under the title, "Plato and Isaiah", is included in Israel and the World, p. 103-112.
55. "What is Man?" in Between Man and Man, p. 118-208. These are Buber's inaugural lectures at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1938; a Hebrew edition was published in 1943.
56. Worte an die Jugend, Schocken Verlag, Berlin, 1938. One of these addresses, "The Prejudices of Youth", is included in Israel and the World, p. 41-52.
57. Der Gesalbte, first published in Werke, Vol. II, p. 725-847; originally intended for publication by Schocken Verlag in 1939. The chapters have in the interim been published separately as follows: Chapter 1, "Das Volksbegehren" in In Memoriam Ernst Lohmeyer, Evangelisches Verlagswerk, Stuttgart, 1951; Chapter 2, "Die Erzählung von Sams Königswahl", Tel Aviv, 1950; Chapter 3, "Samuel und die Lade" in Festschrift for Leo Baeck's 80th Birthday, East and West Library, London, 1954, p. 20-26.

58. (With Judah Magnes.) Two Letters to Gandhi, Rubin Mass, Jerusalem, 1939. A portion of Buber's reply is included in Pointing the Way, p. 139-147; a somewhat different abridgement of the same letter can be found in Israel and the World, p. 225-233.
59. "Abraham der Seher", published in Tel Aviv, 1939; first German publication in Werke, Vol. II, p. 871-895.
60. "The Education of Character" in Between Man and Man, p. 104-117. A Hebrew edition of this address was published in 1939.
61. Prophetic Faith, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1961. This book was first published by H. Meulenhoff, Amsterdam, 1940; the first edition of this translation by Carlyle Witton-Davies appeared in 1949.
62. "The Gods of the Nations and God" in Israel and the World, p. 197-213. The essay here translated by Olga Marx first appeared in Keneset, Tel Aviv, 5701 (1941).
63. For the Sake of Heaven, Meridian Books, Inc., New York, 1958. This chronicle was first serialized in the Jerusalem newspaper, Davar, Oct. 23, 1941 - Jan. 10, 1942. The translation by Ludwig Lewisohn was first printed in 1945; the second edition contains a new foreword.
64. Ha-Ruah voha-Metziut, Tel Aviv, 1942. Translations by Olga Marx of several of these lectures presented at Hebrew University, Jerusalem are included in Israel and the World; "Plato and Isaiah", p. 103-112; "False Prophets", p. 113-118; "On National Education", p. 149-167; "The Spirit of Israel and the World of Today" (somewhat revised in 1946), p. 183-194; and "Hebrew Humanism", p. 240-253.
65. "People and Leader" in Pointing the Way, p. 148-160. This essay was first published in Hebrew in 1942.
66. "Zu Bergsons Begriff der Intuition", published as an introduction to the Hebrew translation of Bergson, included in Werke, Vol. I, p. 1071-1079. A translation of the concluding section by Maurice Friedman is included in Pointing the Way, p. 81-86.
67. "The Love of God and the Idea of Deity" in Israel and the World, p. 53-65; also included in Eclipse of God, p. 47-62. The essay here translated by I. M. Lask was first published in Keneset, Tel Aviv, 5703 (1943).

68. The Way of Man, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1950. This book was first published by Buchausgabe Moses Bialik, Jerusalem, 1945. The English translation is reprinted in Hasidism and Modern Man, p. 126-176.
69. "Love of God and Love of Neighbor" in Hasidism and Modern Man, p. 225-256. This essay first appeared in the Hebrew edition of Die Chassidische Botschaft published by Moses Bialik, Tel Aviv, 1945.
70. The Origin and Meaning of Hasidism, Horizon Press, New York, 1960. Most of this book consists of essays written by Buber in Jerusalem 1940-1943 which were included in the Hebrew edition of Die Chassidische Botschaft, 1945: "The Beginnings", p. 23-57; "The Foundation Stone", p. 59-87; "God and the Soul", p. 183-199; "Redemption", p. 201-217; and "The Place of Hasidism in the History of Religions", p. 219-239.
71. Moses, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1958. A Hebrew text was published by Schocken Verlag, Jerusalem, 1945; the first English edition appeared in 1946.
72. Tales of the Hasidim, Vol. I; The Early Masters; Vol. II: The Later Masters, Schocken Books, Inc., New York, 1962. The translation by Olga Marx is based on the Hebrew edition published by Schocken Verlag, Jerusalem, 1946; a German edition was published by Manesse Verlag, Zurich, 1950; the first English edition appeared in 1947.
73. Ten Rungs: Hasidic Sayings, Schocken Books, Inc., New York, 1947; translated by Olga Marx.
74. Between Man and Man, The MacMillan Company, New York, 1965. The first edition of this translation by Ronald Gregor Smith appeared in 1947. The book is a collection of previously cited items.
75. "Zur Situation der Philosophie", Proceedings of Xth International Congress of Philosophy, Aug. 1948, p. 317f.
76. "Goethe's Concept of Humanity" in Pointing the Way, p. 74-80; also in Arnold Bergstrasser, ed. Goethe and the Modern Age, Henry Regnery, Chicago, 1950, p. 227-233. This is the translation of a talk read for Buber by Ernst Simon at the Goethe Bicentennial Convocation, Aspen, Col., June-July 1949.
77. Paths in Utopia, Beacon Press, Boston, 1958. The Hebrew edition published by Am Oved, Tel Aviv, appeared in 1947; the first edition of this translation by R. F. C. Hull was published in 1949.

78. "Right and Wrong" in Good and Evil, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1953, p. 3-60. The Hebrew edition was published by Magnes Press, Jerusalem, 1950.
79. Two Types of Faith, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1961. This is a translation by Norman P. Goldhawk of the German text published by Manesse Verlag, Zurich, 1950.
80. "Rabbi Nachman's Journey to Palestine" in The Tales of Rabbi Nachman, p. 179-214. This chapter was not included in the original version of the Tales; it was written in Jerusalem during Buber's later return to the study of Hasidism and first printed in Israel and Palestine.
81. Israel and Palestine: The History of an Idea, Farrar Straus and Young, New York, 1952. The translation by Stanley Goodman is based on the German original published by Artemis Verlag, Zurich, 1950.
82. "Books and Men" in Pointing the Way, p. 3, 4. This is a translation by Maurice Friedman of a privately printed birthday tribute to Salmon Schocken, 1951.
83. "Society and the State" in Pointing the Way, p. 161-176. This is a translation by Maurice Friedman of an essay published in Hebrew in 1950 and in World Review, May 1951.
84. "Distance and Relation" in The Knowledge of Man, p. 59-71. This is a translation by Ronald Gregor Smith of an essay originally published separately by Lambert Schneider, Heidelberg, 1951; it was printed in Psychiatry, Vol. XX, 2 (May 1957) as one of Buber's William Alanson White Memorial Lectures.
85. "Images of Good and Evil" in Good and Evil, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1963, p. 63-143. This is a translation by Michael Bullock from the German edition published by Jakob Hegner Verlag, Köln und Olten, 1952.
86. "Healing through Meeting" in Pointing the Way, p. 93-97. This essay was originally prepared as an introduction to Hans Trüb's posthumous book, Heilung aus der Begegnung, Ernst Klett Verlag, Stuttgart, 1952.

87. Eclipse of God, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1957. Most of this book consists of lectures which Buber gave at several American Universities in Nov.-Dec. 1951: "Religion and Reality", p. 11-24; "Religion and Philosophy", p. 25-46; "Religion and Modern Thinking", p. 63-92; "God and the Spirit of Man", p. 121-130; "On the Suspension of the Ethical", p. 113-120. It also includes a "Reply to C. G. Jung", p. 133-137, which first appeared in Merkur, May 1952, and several previously cited items. The German edition issued by Manesse Verlag, Zurich, 1953, appeared a year after the first American publication.
88. At the Turning: Three Addresses on Judaism, Farrer Straus and Young, New York, 1952. This book contains three lectures given in Nov.-Dec. 1951 at the Jewish Theological Seminary, New York: "Judaism and Civilization", "The Silent Question", and "The Dialogue between Heaven and Earth".
89. "Hope for This Hour" in Pointing the Way, p. 220-229. This is Maurice Friedman's translation of the address given at Carnegie Hall, New York, at the conclusion of Buber's 1951-1952 American lecture tour; the address was printed in Merkur, Aug. 1952.
90. "Abstract and Concrete" in Pointing the Way, p. 230-231. This is presented as an "additional note" to "Hope for This Hour"; it was first published in Merkur, Jan. 1953.
91. "The Validity and Limitation of the Political Principle" in Pointing the Way, p. 208-219. This is a translation by Maurice Friedman of an essay published in Neue Schweizer Rundschau, N.F., Vol. XXI, 5 (Sept. 1953).
92. "Genuine Dialogue and the Possibilities of Peace" in Pointing the Way, p. 232-239. This is Buber's address upon receiving the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade at Frankfurt a.M. in Sept. 1953; it was first published by Schneider Verlag, Heidelberg, 1953.
93. "Zwischen Religion und Philosophie", Neue Wege, Vol. XLVII (Nov.-Dec. 1953), p. 436-439. This is a response to Hugo Bergmann's criticism of Eclipse of God.
94. "Prophecy, Apocalyptic, and the Historical Hour" in Pointing the Way, p. 192-207. This essay was first published in Merkur, Vol. VIII, 12 (Dec. 1954).
95. Pointing the Way, Harper & Row, 1963. This is a translation by Maurice Friedman of Hinweise, a collection of essays (all previously cited) written between 1910-1953, published by Manesse Verlag, Zurich, 1953. The first American edition was published in 1955.

96. "Afterword: The History of the Dialogical Principle" in Between Man and Man, p. 209-226. Buber added this "Nachwort" to a collection of his previously issued writings on the dialogical principle published by Lambert Schneider, Heidelberg, 1954.
97. "Christ, Hasidism, Gnosis" in Origin and Meaning of Hasidism, p. 241-254. Buber here replies to Rudolf Pannwitz's critique of his interpretation of Hasidism; the essay first appeared in Merkur, Feb. 1954.
98. "Elements of the Interhuman" in The Knowledge of Man, p. 72-88. This essay first appeared in Merkur, Feb. 1954; it was also printed as one of Buber's William Alanson White lectures.
99. "Man and his Image-Work" in The Knowledge of Man, p. 149-165. The essay first appeared in Die Neue Rundschau, Vol. LXVI, 1 (1955); a translation by Maurice Friedman was published in Portfolio, Vol. VII, Winter 1963.
100. Elija: Ein Musterlienspiel in Werke, Vol. II, p. 1187-1233. This play was written in early 1955; there is an unpublished English version prepared by Maurice Friedman.
101. "What is Common to All" in The Knowledge of Man, p. 89-109. This essay first appeared in Die Neue Rundschau, Vol. LXVII, 4 (Dec. 1956); this translation prepared by Maurice Friedman was first printed in the Review of Metaphysics, Vol. X, 3 (Mar. 1958).
102. "Guilt and Guilt Feelings" in The Knowledge of Man, p. 121-148. A German text was published in Merkur, Vol. IX, 8 (Aug. 1957); the translation was first printed in Psychiatry, May 1957.
103. "Hasidism and Modern Man" in Hasidism and Modern Man, p. 21-43. This essay was originally published in Merkur, Vol. X, 10 (Oct. 1956).
104. "Postscript" in I and Thou, p. 123-137. Buber wrote this "Nachwort" for the new German edition published by Lambert Schneider, Heidelberg, 1958.
105. Hasidism and Modern Man, Horizon Press, New York, 1958. The book is a collection of previously cited items.
106. "The Word that is Spoken" in The Knowledge of Man, p. 110-120. This essay was first included in Wort und Wirklichkeit, a publication of the Munich Academy of Fine Arts, 1960; the translation was published in Modern Age, Vol. V, 4 (Fall 1961).

107. (With Franz Rosenzweig, translators.) Die Schrift, Jakob Hegner Verlag, Köln und Olten, 1954-60. 4 volumes. This edition presents the completed translation; the publication of the earliest portions of the Buber-Rosenzweig Bible dates back to 1925.
108. Begegnung: Autobiographische Fragmente, W. Kohlhammer Verlag, Stuttgart, 1960. Many of these recollections are excerpted from earlier works; they were collected by Buber for inclusion in the Library of Living Philosophers volume devoted to him in lieu of the usual "intellectual autobiography".
109. Zur Verdeutschung des letzten Bandes der Schrift, Jakob Hegner Verlag, Köln und Olten, 1962; also included in Werke, Vol. II, p. 1167-1183.
110. Israel and the World, Schocken Books, Inc., New York, 1963. The first English edition appeared in 1948 and included only previously cited items. The second edition contains two additional lectures: "Israel and the Command of the Spirit", p. 253-257, reprinted from Congress Weekly, Sept. 8, 1958; and "Israel's Mission and Zion", p. 258-263, reprinted from Forum, Vol. VI (1957).
111. "Antwort" in Paul Arthur Schillp and Maurice Friedman, editors', The Philosophy of Martin Buber, W. Kohlhammer Verlag, Stuttgart, 1964, p. 589-639.
112. "Interpreting Hasidism" in Commentary, Vol. XXXVI, p. 218-225 (Sept. 1963). This is an "additional note" to Buber's reply to Rivka Schatz-Uffenheimer's critique of his interpretation of Hasidism published in Schillp and Friedman, The Philosophy of Martin Buber.
113. The Knowledge of Man, Harper & Row, New York, 1965. This book includes previously cited items plus a "Dialogue between Martin Buber and Carl Rogers", p. 166-184.
114. Werke, Erster Band, Schriften zur Philosophie, Verlag Lambert Schneider, Heidelberg, 1962. This volume includes Daniel, I and Thou, all of Between Man and Man, all of The Knowledge of Man, Eclipse of God, Images of Good and Evil, Paths in Utopia, Two Types of Faith, some essays from Pointing the Way, and a part of "Antwort".

115. Werke, Zweiter Band, Schriften zur Bibel, Verlag Lambert Schneider, Heidelberg, 1964. This volume includes Moses, Prophetic Faith, Königtum Gottes, Der Gesalbte, "Abraham der Seher", Right and Wrong, Die Schrift und Inhrer Verdeutschung, Elija, and some essays from both Pointing the Way and Israel and the World.
116. Werke, Dritter Band, Schriften zum Chassidismus Verlag Lambert Schneider, Heidelberg, 1963. This volume includes the introductions to The Tales of Rabbi Nachman and The Legend of the Baal-Shem, The Baal-Shem's Instruction in Intercourse with God, Tales of the Hasidim, the Way of Man, Die Chassidsche Botschaft, Tales of Rabbi Nachman, some essays from Hasidism and Modern Man, another part of the "Antwort", "Interpreting Hasidism", and Eclipse of God.
117. Nachlese, Verlag Lambert Schneider, Heidelberg, 1965. These are "gleanings" from the writings of 1902-1964 which seemed to Buber still the lasting expression of an experience of feeling, or even a dream. This gathering includes a few poems, birthday greetings, a foreword to a collection of his late wife's novels, tributes to Hesse and to Hammersköld, several pieces which Hans Kohn's listing had made one eager to read.

PART TWO: WORKS ABOUT BUBER

This portion of the Bibliography presents a list of those works about Buber found relevant to the questions raised in this thesis. It has been divided into five sections: Studies of Buber's work as a whole or studies which do not fit into any of the other listings; Assessments of Buber's work from a literary point of view, including evaluations of his achievements as a translator; Discussions of his philosophical anthropology, including his writings on the dialogical principle; Appraisals of his Biblical studies, including his understanding of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity; Considerations of his interpretation of Judaism, particularly of the Hasidic movement. Within each section, books and articles are listed alphabetically by author's last name. Hans Kohn's "Bibliographie III: Abhandlungen über Bubers Werk" in Martin Buber, Sein Werk und seine Zeit, p. 395-403, lists many articles published in German periodicals before 1930 which I have been unable to consult. Some additional references are also to be found in the bibliography appended to Maurice Friedman's Martin Buber: The Life of Dialogue, p. 289-296.

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Kerenyi, Karl. "Martin Buber als Klassiker" in Schillp and Friedman, editors, Martin Buber, p. 538-547.

Rosenzweig, Franz with Martin Buber. Die Schrift und ihre Verdeutschung. Six of the essays included in this book are by Rosenzweig.

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3. PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Brown, James. Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Buber and Barth: Subject and Object in Modern Theology. Collier Books, New York, 1962, p. 97-126.

Diamond, Malcolm. "Dialogue und Theologie" in Schillp and Friedman, Martin Buber, p. 208-219.

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Scholem, Gerson. "Martin Buber's Hasidism", Commentary, Vol. XXXII, 4 (Oct. 1961), p. 305-316

PART THREE: WORKS NOT ON BUBER BUT RELEVANT TO
DISSERTATION TOPIC

This portion of the Bibliography is divided into five sections closely corresponding to the divisions in Part Two: General, including books which are helpful in understanding the background and setting of Buber's work; Literary criticism, including studies of the imagination and of myth; Philosophical anthropology and the dialogical principle; Biblical interpretation, including works on biblical hermeneutics and discussions of the contemporary theological situation; Judaism, especially Hasidism.

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This work is to such a large degree an intellectual history of the German-speaking world between 1900 and 1930 that it must appear in this listing also.

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